CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

HOW DO GASTRONOMIC INFLUENCERS AFFECT CONSUMER DECISION?

The role of consumer activity in the decision-making process in gastronomic tourism, via the example of Instagram

Doctoral Dissertation

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Budapest, 2022

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ANNEX

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1. INTRODUCTION

"... we live a significant part of our virtual lives today with the help of devices, in a much broader way than before."

(Rekettye et al. 2016:p11[1])

The focus of the present dissertaion is on gastronomic tourism, which focuses on the role of consumer participation in social media, especially in terms of the impression of influencers.

With the development of infocommunication technology (ICT), communication practices have also changed. More and more of our activities are linked to social media websites, such as booking hotels or choosing restaurants. With the proliferation of smart devices (smartphones, tablets), social media has become a part of our lives online and offline, and different platforms have networked our daily lives and thus become a connecting force. According to Laudon–Laudon (2014), Web 2.0 has four well-defined features, namely: interactivity, real-time consumer control, social participation, and user-generated content. Social media affords an opportunity for consumers to express their opinions through online communication. In addition, influencers have appeared on social media platforms to influence consumers in their decision-making with their recommendations. Content-sharing platforms are profitable sources of information in consumer decision-making, and products and services that are known in an experiential way come to the view of selection. As it is possible to share visual inputs (photos, videos) in the virtual space, the source of information is also more secure. Thus, consumer power has been strengthened, so online media platforms are able to influence the decisions of companies and service providers, and consumers expect social and economic actors to respond to their expectations (REKETTYE et al. 2016, SZAKÁLY 2022).

Gastronomy also plays a significant role on social media, which is shaped and provided by consumers themselves. These gastronomic contents reach other consumers through different platforms, thus influencing the eating behavior of consumers

[1] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/dj81bam_68_p11#dj81bam_68_p11

(TÖRŐCSIK–PÁL 2015) and their consumption intentions. Gastronomy also plays a significant role in the development of destinations (GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013), so online food opinion-sharing platforms have a meaningful impact on the daily life of the destination, with a positive impact on visiting a tourist destination (CHEN et al. 2014, SZAKÁLY 2022).

Tourists who are attracted to gastronomy are interested in various gastronomic activities, such as tasting, preparing, experiencing, discovering, and writing about food and drink (KIVELA–CROTTS 2005). Destinations use gastronomy as a marketing tool to advertise their culture, to which tourism is the link, connecting them with the consumer and providing an offer to consumers (GYIMÓTHY 1999, SZAKÁLY 2022). The fact that I researched the topic from the side of social media, and within that the effect of influencers on consumers crystallized at the beginning of my doctoral studies. I have primarily studied the impact of social platforms on consumers, which has shown that most research favors content analysis on opinion-sharing platforms, so I focused my studies on sharing images on online platforms, as influencers also visualize their content. Using SentiOne software, I conducted a research on Lake Balaton and gastronomy, from which two important conclusions were drawn for my dissertation, namely **the prominent role of Instagram** and **the emergence of influencers**. It is important to note that influencer marketing can be described as relatively novel, as there were also opinion leaders in front of them (professionally recognized individuals). The novelty of influencers lies in the fact that they are on the one hand in a different environment (virtual space) and, on the other hand, anyone can be an influencer whose content attracts the attention of consumers and gains their trust, i.e. they do not necessarily have to be professionally recognized. Influencer marketing is based on the enduring popularity of social media and has become a common business model for online marketing (LEE et al. 2021). The topic of the dissertation was partly influenced by the emergence of a virus called SARS-CoV-2 (better known as COVID-19, coronavirus) in 2020. It was essential to incorporate it into the research because the focus of its research is on the hospitality industry. My scientific goal, as can be seen in the title of the dissertation, is to contribute to the expansion of the literature on gastronomic tourism, online consumer activity, and the role of influencer. The scientific novelty of the topic is further enhanced by the interdisciplinary perspective in the field of social sciences from the point of view of tourism marketing and the psychological approach of social psychology. The methodological goal of my doctoral dissertation is to expand the planned behavioral model with activity and to use moderators (destination and Covid-19) in the study of the relationship between consumption intent and actual consumption, which is analyzed by PLS-SEM method. Thus, the focus of the dissertation is on testing and modeling a theoretical concept based on consumer inquiry. The results of the dissertation may be significant for the tourism and leisure sector for the hospitality industry as well as for service providers who also use online media and influencer marketing.

The present dissertation can be divided into two structural units. The first is a review of the literature, and the second is the empirical research itself and its results.

The literature review consists of three further parts. Chapter 1 explains the role of gastronomy in tourism and leisure activities. The role of influencers is presented in Chapter 2, and consumer activity is presented in Chapter 3. In the chapters, the concepts were defined and research on the topics was presented. At the end of each chapter, there are summary paragraphs to clarify the relevance of the topic and the validity of the research. At the end of the literature review, the conceptual framework of the dissertation can be found as a summary (Chapter 5). In this chapter, *Figure 11* aims to make the theoretical framework easier to understand and understand.

The second unit consists of the presentation and analysis of the methodology of the empirical research itself and the presentation of the results. Thus, after the theoretical summary, the aim and methodology of the research are presented in Chapter 5 of the dissertation, as well as the main research questions, the definition of the sampling frame, the primary research methodology, i.e. the questionnaire and its scale development. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the statistical data analysis method, in which I describe the method of analyzing the model of structural equations. In Chapter 6, the analysis of the questionnaire presents demographic data first, followed by measurement and evaluation of the structural model. I conclude the chapter by evaluating the moderating variables and the predictive relevance of the model. Chapter 7 consists of the interpretation of the results and the conclusions. The results are interpreted based on the results of testing the hypotheses, which I supplement with the analysis of other statistical results. I conclude the dissertation with Chapter 8, during which I summarize the theoretical, methodological, and practical significance of the work, as well as the limitations of the research and future research opportunities.

2. THE ROLE OF GASTRONOMY IN TOURISM AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

2.1. The coneptual synopsis of gastronomic tourism

The definition of gastronomy tourism and its appearance and interpretation as a tourist attraction are introduced separately during the description of the concept. Gastronomy is a word of Greek origin that consists of two parts: gastro, which means gastric (stomach), and – nomy, which means science, so we can call it gastric science if we translate it word for word. Brillant-Savarin began from this point, as well, when he first formulated the definition of gastronomy in his book entitled „*The Physiology of Taste*" published in 1825. When defining gastronomy, he concluded that "*gastronomy is the systematic knowledge of everything that applies to human nutrition, and its goal is to maintain human beings' lives for as long as possible by providing the best nourishment possible.*"(BRILLANT-SAVARIN 1912:42). Furthermore, gastronomy is a science based on nutrition that aims to satisfy life's primary desire by combining dishes, culture, and various branches of science (Physics, Biology, Chemistry) with the goal of delectation. After becoming acquainted with the definitions, it appears that scientists relied on this definition as well. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the tourism industry, it is unavoidable to regard gastronomy as a cultural tourist attraction.

As we can see, the definition of gastronomy was already defined in the middle of the nineteenth century, in contrast to the concept of gastronomic tourism, which has yet to be widely accepted by scientists. „*Many trials have been conducted to define gastronomic tourism, and the definition developed by Hall–Sharples (2003) is the most widely accepted definition, which is as follows.:* ***gastronomic tourism is an empirical journey to a gastronomic region that includes visiting primary food producers, food festivals, producer fairs, cooking shows, tasting quality dishes, and any other gastronomic activities. Furthermore, it is a process of learning about different cultures that includes a variety of elements, ranging from experiments to gain or understand knowledge, to the production of culinary specialties, and finally to consumption*** *(World Tourism Organization (hereinafter UNWTO) 2012).*" (SZAKÁLY 2022:36) Michalkó (2012), for instance, views the concept in the same way and interprets gastronomy as a man-made attraction that enhances consumers' everyday pleasures by providing them with additional experiences – such as visiting a famous catering establishment or trying the dishes of a lesser-known international cuisine – realized by the hand-in-hand effects of special tastes and the environment experienced through consumption.

„*If we examine the definitions from the perspective of the tourist product, we can say that gourmet tourism is a distinct subset of tourism (HJALAGER–RICHARDS 2002, GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013, HERNÁNDEZ-MOGOLLÓN et al. 2015). With a view to destination development, gastronomy is the key element of the tourist experience (HALL–MITCHELL 2005, OKUMUS et al. 2007, UNWTO 2012, SZIVA et al. 2017a).*" (SZAKÁLY 2022:36) Based on this, the context of the culture and the memorable experience play a significant role in regards to a given destination as long as gastronomic tourism is present. From this standpoint, gastronomic tourism can be defined as follows: gastronomy is the fundamental incentive for a journey, during which the tourist would like to get acquainted with the dishes, ingredients, or a chef's work of a destination, and from a scientific point of view, it refers to the culinary arts and the nutrition of high-quality foods (HALL et al. 2003, KIVELA–CROTTS 2006, GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013). On the basis of Kivela and Crott's (2006) study, we can consider food as an element of a local culture where the destination of culinary history is determined by the customs and traditions of a particular community. As a result, while preparing their dishes, the locals make their community's culture tangible from a sensory standpoint, while the established traditional cuisine appears as a tourist product and a travel motivation. It provides us with the opportunity to taste some dishes not known previously, as well as learning how to enjoy them in a new way. It is important to recognize the dual role of gastronomy in tourism as it can also exist as a standalone touristic product. From another perspective, as a part of basic infrastructure it can serve as an additional product in a given destination and meet one's basic physical needs (MTÜ 2017, SENGEL et al. 2015).

The definition formulated by the Hungarian Touristic Agency (hereinafter MTÜ) (2018) is the one that most closely reflects the international definition of gastronomic tourism in relevant Hungarian literature. „*Gastronomic tourism is a tourist product, during which the main motivation of the visitor is to taste the dishes and beverages typical of the destination visited, try the national and regional cuisines, learn about the catering traditions of the destination, and an aspiration to acquire knowledge of the different ways of making gastronomic specialties may also occur. Visiting well-known catering establishments – a restaurant, a workshop or a factory – or festivals, competitions* *centered on special dishes or drinks can also be motivating*." MTÜ (2018[2]) also emphasizes the increasing role of gastronomic tourism in both international and national markets where there has been considerable growth in the field of wine tourism (wine festivals, harvest events).

Following the introduction of the most important definitions associated with gastronomic tourism, I will describe below the grouping of the definitions of gastronomic tourism based on the analysis of the theoretical background, as well as its determination from a research perspective and a disciplinary context, which will be followed by the conceptual definition of the concept.

The grouping of the definitions of gastronomic tourism

The proper use of expressions appearing in relevant international literature is also a source of debate as they are frequently used as synonyms (food, tourism, gastronomy tourism) (HORNG–TSAI, 2012, ELLISH et. al 2018). However, the expressions are used in different contexts in tourism depending on the host-guest perspective (ELLISH et al. 2018). The concepts overlap, as shown in *Table 1*. On the other hand, there is a steady progression. While in the case of a local cuisine the goal is to place the destination on the map, culinary tourism is about uniqueness, experience and there is some duality in the definition of gourmet tourism.

While Hall–Sharples believes (2008) that the main goal of a gourmet tourist is to taste the specialty of a particular destination, according to Blichfeldt–Therkelsen (2010), the trend determined by the Michelin guidance is relevant when choosing a destination.

On the other hand, it is essential to emphasize that, in terms of national relevant literature, the conceptual subdivision of international literature enables a much more colorful grouping than the domestic language environment allows.

So in the case of this subdivision, English expressions are used primarily, and their Hungarian equivalents are marked in brackets if possible. The subdivision is based on Lee et. al analysis's (2014). Food tourism is used as a generic term in international literature (food tourism – this expression is not used in Hungarian), which is further subdivided:

[2] Source: https://mtu.gov.hu/cikkek/bor-es-gasztroturizmus

Concept	Author	Description
local cuisine (helyi konyha)	Hall–Mitchell (2005)	„...unique sources to develop, introduce and market a destination.”
	Blichfeldt–Therkelsen (2010)	„...meaningful part of regional brands, not only for gourmet, but also for the larger group of tourists who are interested in authenticity and in discovering the identity of a regio.”
	Gordin–Trabskaya (2013)	„...source of competitive advantage and a key component of a regional brand."
	Baah et al (2020)	„For international tourists, the local cuisine offers a new experience and the opportunity to become more immersed in the culture and traditions of the host.”
culinary tourism (kulináris turizmus)	Long (1998) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	„...the materiality of food of a destination that helps to ground the experience for tourists, helping them to relate it to their everyday lives.”
	Pullphothong–Sopha (2012)	„...the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences.”
	Ellish et al. (2018)	„...experience of eating activities and consequent cultural consumption...”
gourmet tourism (gourmet turizmus)	Hall–Sharples (2008) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	“…tourists with high interest in food and wine and their travelling motivation is primary the visit of specific food event or farmers’ market All, or nearly all, visitor activities are food related."
	Blichfeldt–Therkelsen (2010)	„...in fact, gourmets are not always looking for authenticity; local flavors may not appeal to them, and they may in fact prefer the haute cuisine restaurants featured in Michelin guides.”
tasting tourism (kóstolókon való részvétel)	Boniface (2003) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	„...a trip to a destination to taste food and drink.”
restaurant toursim (éttermi turizmus)	Sparks et al(2003) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	„...the role of the restaurant industry in the tourist experience and destination selection.”
wine tourism (borturizmus)	Brown and Getz (2005) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	„...a form of travel based on a desire to visit wine-producing regions or in which passengers are encouraged to visit specifically wine-producing regions and wineries while traveling for other reasons.”
	Thanh–Kirova 2018	„...includes visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine demonstrations in wine tourism destinations.”
gastronomy tourism (gasztronómiai turizmus)	Kivela and Crotts (2005) in. Lee et al. (2014b)	„...travelling for the purpose of exploring and enjoying the destination’s food and beverage and to savour unique and memorable gastronomy experiences.”
	Ellish et al. (2018)	„...the role of food in the culture and way of life of society.”

Table 1: Concepts related to gastronomic tourism

Source: Elaborated by the author

The definition of gastronomic tourism from the perspective of relating research focus points

Ellish et al. (2018) indentified the following groupings during his analysis on the basis of the definitions used by academics:

Tourist-oriented studies:

- activity-based viewpont: involving tourists in gastronomic-based experiences (sensory and cultural experiences), such as visiting a local grower (QUAN–WANG 2004, ELLISH at al. 2018).
- motivation-based perspective: the tourist's desire to sample the typical dishes of a specific destination. This motivation is crucial when choosing a destination.
- mixed perspective: the tourist is motivated by a desire to learn about gastronomy.

Destination-oriented studies: the primary focus is on destination development, resources, tourist products, and destination marketing. The destinational approach frequently interprets gastronomic tourism as a subcategory of cultural tourism, or as a component of village, heritage tourism, which serves as a tourist supply pull.

Gastronomic tourism from a disciplinary perspective

Tourism is recognized as a multidisciplinary field (MICHALKÓ 2012, ELLISH et al. 2018), so studying gastronomy tourism in a disciplinary context is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the subject. For gastro-tourist research, the following disciplinary approaches are apparent, depending on the subject of the study:

Earth sciences – tourism geography

The link between tourism and geography in gastrotourism is also clear (ELLISH at al. 2018). The geographical approach entails the appearance of food in the local area, as well as the role of resources in tourism. Furthermore, it addresses the role of food in destination and regional development (HALL–MITCHELL 2005, GYMOTHY–MYKLETUN 2009, OKUMUS et al. 2007, GÁLVEZ et al. 2017a, SZIVA et al. 2017a), as well as the role of restaurants and their „atmosphere creating" effect. Simultaneously, the geographical approach is supplemented by disciplinary fields such as destination branding, destination marketing, and promotion, while the definitions: local food and locality are associated with sustainability and nature conversation (ELLISH et al. 2018).

Economics – tourism marketing

Gastronomy tourism is frequently approached by researchers from the marketing side, such as destination marketing, market segmentation, promotion, brand building, and product development (GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013, ELLISH et al. 2018, SZAKÁLY 2019). Tourists, on the other hand, are frequently treated as consumers in marketing research, and consumer behavior is studied with a focus on satisfaction and motivation (KIM et al. 2013, COHEN et al. 2014). From the standpoint of consumer satisfaction, the probability of a consumer returning to a specific location or restaurant is investigated (ALDERIGHI at al. 2016, ELLISH et al. 2018, SOLIMAN 2019).

Cultural sciences – cultural tourism

In the heart of gastronomic tourism, there is culture. As a result, the cultural scientific approach is outstanding, and research reveals more types of crossings (ELLISH et al. 2018). One of the trends is the intersection of culture, marketing, and management, where researchers base their research on business theories (WANG 2011). The other line of research is a fusion of culture, social science, and liberal arts, in which the gastronomic characteristics of the destination, traditions, identity, and local cuisine become the focus of the investigation (SOGARI et al.2017). While the above-mentioned two trends are emphasized in ELLISH et al. (2018) research, I believe it is necessary to present a third trend, which is the merger of cultural and earth sciences where the relationships of gastronomy, culture, and destination are the focus of the research. (KIM–EVES 2012, MAK et al. 2012, BROKAJ 2014, HERNÁNDEZ-MOGOLLÓN et al. 2015, GÁLVEZ et al. 2017b).

Social scienses – leasure activities

From a social scientific standpoint, the study of the relationship between spending free time, social status, prestige, and restaurant consumption has piqued the researchers' interest (GHEORGHE et al. 2014, PRIVITERA–NESCI 2014, SENGEL et al. 2015). On the other hand, a merger with cultural discipline can be observed here, as food consumption is the cultural consumption activity in which culinary experiences and the relationship of destination heritages come into focus. (MAK et al. 2012, ELLISH et al. 2018).

The arts – film tourism

In the field of the arts, the linkage between gastronomy-themed films, cooking shows, and the study of the scene comes into focus (KIVELA–CROTTS 2006, IRIMIÁS 2015, TAŞPINAR–TEMELOĞLU 2018), whose discipline is tightly linked to the research areas of cultural and earth sciences. However, in recent years, the design of the dishes served (BAIOMY et al. 2019) and their presentation on social media platforms (HOLMBERG et al. 2016, HILVERDA et al. 2017) have played an increasing role in research, so the arts are intertwined with the economic and social sciences.

Enviromental science – sustainable tourism

The study of the connection between sustainability and gastronomy occurs as a feature of environmentally-friendly restaurants, seasonality, involvement of local growers, environmental awareness of consumers and choice of destination. This discipline has also seen the intervention of the fields of sciences. Based on my analysis of relevant literature, I can conclude that the study of sustainability, gastronomy and consumer behaviour is now in the spotlight with the primary focus of research being on consumers' environmentally conscious attitudes and desire to return (KIM et al. 2013, JANG et al. 2015, CHUNG 2016, JUN–ARENDT 2016, TING et al. 2019, SALZBERG et al. 2019).

Consequently, analyzing the specific areas of sciences we can conclude that during the research some disciplines are completed by other disciplines, indicating that an interdisciplinary research approach of gastronomic tourism is apparent in the field of gastro –tourist research. Overall, we can conclude that there is a strong presence of earth sciences, economic sciences and cultural sciences during gastro-tourist research. On the other hand, researchers' interests are shifting toward social and environmental sciences with a growing interest in the relationship between consumer behavior, spending leisure time, environmental awareness, and gastronomy.

The conceptual definition of gastronomic tourism

After reviewing the relevant literature and considering research perspectives and disciplinary context during the conceptual definition of gastronomic tourism, I came to the following conclusion. The concept of gastronomic tourism is approached from four aspects:

1. **Destination** – knowledge/exploration of destination through local tastes, consumption of local growers'/producers' products.
2. **Culture** – learning about local people and their customs, traditions on the base of their gastronomic culture.
3. **Motivation** –the consumer travels to the chosen destination due to gastronomic supply to sample typical, local dishes or to consume a well-known, famous chef's dish.
4. **Marketing and management –** development of destination and product offer, mapping consumer satisfaction and intention of return.

There are close connections and causalities between the above four points of view (for example, see Hall–Sharples's (2003) definition on page 5 of the dissertation). As a result, the concepts also overlap. So based on the literature review, I would define gastronomic tourism as follows: **Gastronomic tourism is a tourist product that, in addition to the intensity and motivation of the consumer's interest, is influenced by the gastronomic culture of the destination's inhabitants (the supply of local producers – local supply, and their traditional food processing customs), which can be a central element in the development of tourism and destinations, promoting a positive image of a region or country.**

Overall, we can refer to consumers as gastrotourists when they are willing to leave their home for gastronomic reasons (KIVELA–CROTTS 2005, MICHALKÓ 2012, FÜREDER – RÁTZ 2016). Furthermore, gastronomic tourism is a tourist trip in which the gastrotourist's goal is to become acquainted with the dishes and beverages typical of the destination in such a way that it results in a lasting, memorable gastronomix experience (HJALAGER 2010, HERNÁNDEZ-MOGOLLÓN et al. 2015, KISS et al. 2017, LEVITT et al. 2017, SZIVA et al. 2017b, BAAH et al. 2020). For the purposes of my dissertation, I base my research on the latter definition. As a result, gastronomic tourism encompasses all trips that have something to do with food and beverages. As a result, it is thought that gastronomic tourism (food tourism in English) may emerge as a generic term (WILLIAMS et al, 2013), which can be specified based on different conditions such as culinary tourism or gourmet tourism, which will be discussed in chapter 2.3.

2.2. Gastronomic supply

For the purposes of my dissertation, it is crucial to introduce the role of gastronomy from the perspectives of both leisure activities and tourism, as I distinguish between these two roles during my research. As a result, gastronomic supply serves a dual purpose in the tourism industry. The same fundamental needs are met, but the institutional frameworks are different. While tourism is realized away from the permanent address and the habitual zones (MICHALKÓ 2004), leisure activities are related to the everyday processes of life (PUCZKÓ–RÁTZ 2011). Gastronomy appears as attractive (LEVITT et al. 2017, BAAH et al. 2020) in both cases, urging the consumer to visit a specific location to satisfy his needs, thereby being suitable for producing demand (PUCZKÓ–RÁTZ 2011, MICHALKÓ 2004). According to Füreder–Rátz (2016), a gastro-tourist can be someone who visits a butcher's out of his everyday zone, and also someone who goes to a forest to collect wild garlic.

The elements of the personnel and equipment of tourism build upon one another (*Figure 1*). There is attractiveness in the middle of the system, which cannot be sold without the fundamental-infrastructure, upon which tourist infrastructure is built, which establishes the suprastructure (MICHALKÓ 2012).

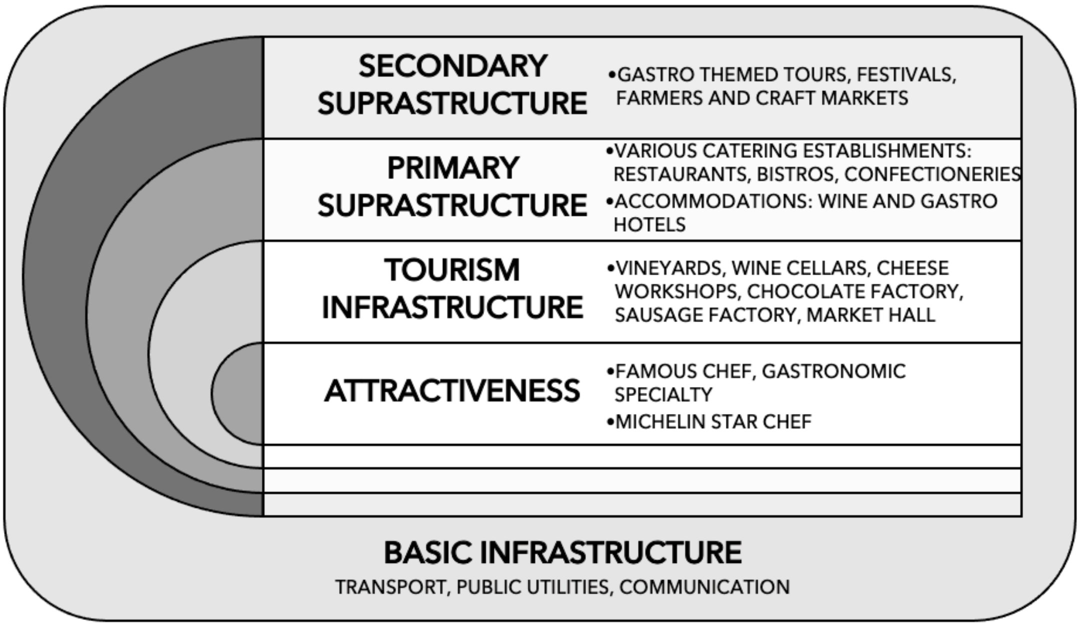

Figure 1: The relationship between gastrotourism products and the material conditions of tourism

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Szakály 2019b:p2[3]

Transportation (solid enclosure, railway system, airport), utility (running water, electricity, sewerage system), and communication (telephone network, internet connection) are the elements of fundamental-infrastructure, and their presence is the basic criterion of the development of tourism in a specific destination.

Tourist attractiveness refers to supply factors that also apply to individual products. In gastronomic tourism, this can be a gastronomic speciality that can only be tasted in a specific town, such as a cheese speciality that serves as the foundation of the one-day visitor circulation (BOTO–GARCÍA et al. 2019, KONDOR et al. 2020).

Touristic infrastructure shows establishments, which help to reveal attractiveness. In the case of gastrotourism, for instance, it is a vineyard or winecellar. The touristic infrastructure shows establishments that help to reveal attractiveness. On the other hand, when we talk about a Michelin-starred restaurant as attractiveness, we can’t separate it from the touristic infrastructure. The restaurant (the establishment itself) appears as a static touristic infrastructure in this case (the sale of attractiveness takes place in the restaurant). In the case of modes of transportation, we are talking about dynamic touristic infrastructure. Attractiveness is a restaurant found on a ship that also serves as a means of transport.

[3] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/m580turtei_47_p2#m580turtei_47_p2

Two basic elements of the primary tourist suprastructure are catering and accommodation. In tourism theory, gastronomic tourism is specific, because in many cases, attractiveness is defined by the catering establishment (BLICHFELDT–THERKELSEN 2010, MENEGUEL et al 2018, BAAH et al. 2020, KÓRÓDI–BAKOS 2019). „*We distinguish the different types of catering establishments based on their characteristics, which satisfy both local people's and tourists' needs, and thus they own a community creator function, which significantly influences travellers' opinions about a particular destination"* (MICHALKÓ 2012 in SZAKÁLY 2019:p2[4]).

The secondary suprastructure is the sum of services and products available in retail trade, as well, such as products obtainable at farmer's markets and artisan markets (LEVITT et al. 2017, MENEGUEL et al. 2018, BURSZTYN–MARTINS 2018). Furthermore, there may be gastronomic festivals or thematic tours, which may result in a longer retention time (HJALAGER –RICHARDS 2002, QUAN–WANG 2004, LEVITT et al 2017). The elements of secondary suprastructure play a a significant role in the exploration of the destination. The discovery of new attractions may result in a change in the original program or may entice one to return (QUAN–WANG 2004).

Many factors influence gastronomic supply, including established habits, geographical location, regional climate, and historical and religious influences (SZAKÁLY 2019b). These destinational and cultural factors have an impact on the diversity and uniqueness of raw materials used and produced in the destination (SIMS, 2009; GÜZEL–APAYDIN, 2016). Because the dishes and beverages typical of the destination make up the majority of the destination's supply, they are depleted during marketing in order to differentiate from competitors. As a result, an increasing number of regions realise the significance of local cuisines and gastronomical culture and incorporate it into their marketing strategies to popularize the destination (HORNG–TSAI, 2010., OKUMUS et al 2013). In the field of international gastro-tourist research, the presentation of gastronomic experience plays an important role, and the so-called memorable gastronomic experience influences the attractiveness of the destination (MYKLETUN–GYIMÓTHY, 2010; LEE et al. 2014b; GHEORGHE et al. 2014; RABBIOSI, 2016), especially when attractiveness is easily accessible (WILLIAMS et al. 2014).

[4] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/m580turtei_47_p2#m580turtei_47_p2

Aside from being a physical necessity, eating is also a cultural and social activity. In terms of gastronomy, tourists' preferences vary. On the one hand, for some tourists, gastronomy is a priority, and they seek expensive, exclusive products, so they go to fancy restaurants, wine cellars, and festivals, and they look for artisanal products typical of the region in addition to the exclusive products (HALL et al.2003). On the other hand, there are tourists who prefer to consume well-known products (SENGEL et al. 2015).
Due to globalization, the McDonaldization phenomenon has recently become very common, in which local cuisine has been homogenized and resulted in a „global cuisine", posing a threat to the destination's gastronomic identity (MAK et al, 2012). Destination-specific cuisine can be the starting point for developing package tours as well as thematic tour routes, putting the product at the center of product development strategies in which it is responsible for the development of specific areas and destinations.

In terms of gastronomic tourism supply, the following categorizations can be made, each with its own example:

- „*gormet tourism: restaurant of a famous chef*
- *culinary restaurant: national cuisines, festivals,*
- *restaurant tourism: visiting restaurants qualified by restaurant guides (Michelin, Gault&Millau), wine bars, cafés, home restaurants*
- *producer tourism: producer markets, village guest tables, visiting producers*
- *wine tourism*
- *gastronomic thematic routes (wine-route, whiskey-route)*
- *ruin pub tourism*
- *other gastro-tourist supply: cooking courses, gastronomic events and festivals, gastronomic museums, fine dining menus*" (HALL–SHARPLES 2003, IRIMIÁS 2015, MTÜ 2018 in SZAKÁLY 2019b:p6[5]).

[5] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/m580turtei_47_p6#m580turtei_47_p6

2.3. Gastronomic demand

Motivation, the key to demand, occurs when an individual feels a sense of lack, which leads to satisfying one's needs. The hierarchy system of human needs has a significant impact on tourism (*Figure 2*), with gastronomic tourism appearing in two levels (MICHALKÓ 2012). The first level is to meet physiological needs, so gastro-tourism represents a demand for nutrition. It appears for the second time on level 6, which represents aesthetic needs, which occur beyond the fulfillment of basic needs and are influenced by the individual's living conditions and existential opportunities. On this higher level of needs, one can already perceive social needs, as well as the pleasure created by gastronomic experience as a man-made attractiveness, which is completed by the combined effect of the special flavor experienced through consumption and the environment.

Figure 2: Hierarchy of needs and tourism connections
Source: Elaborated by the author based on Szakály 2020:15

Another viewpoint holds that a tourist's motivation can be physical, cultural, interpersonal, status, and prestige-based (FIELD 2011, CAMILLERI 2018). Physical need is redirected toward meeting basic needs. Since dishes and eating habits have always been important components of a society's culture, cultural motivation has an underlying content (HALL–MITCHELL 2005, UNWTO 2012, GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013, SZIVA et al. 2017a). Local dishes and beverages appear as an organic part of the memorable travel experience. Furthermore, it is possible to sample dishes and beverages that are different from those we are familiar with or have grown accustomed to, in order to discover a new way to enjoy them. The aspiration to sample exotic dishes is linked to the desire to learn about local culture, which is the primary motivation for culinary and gourmet tourism (QUAN–WANG 2004, JONG–VARLEY 2017). Although eating is a physiological necessity, it is also a cultural and social activity (SENGEL et al. 2015). (FIELD 2011). Interpersonal motivation (CHEUNG–THADANI 2010, JALILVAND et al. 2011, KIM–EVES 2012. TAAR et al 2014, SENGEL et al 2015) refers to a desire for social contacts, which is already a social activity. Motivation based on status and prestige (KIM et al. 2009, FIELD 2011, GHEORGHE et al. 2014, LEE et al. 2014a) is also important in gastronomy. The role of the individual in society is also demonstrated by the restaurant one can get to, which now has an online platform since the appearance of social media.

The tourist, or consumer, is the personification of gastronomic demand. Tourists' spheres of interest in gastronomy are shifting: some tourists prioritize gastronomy, while others prefer to consume only well-known dishes (SENGEL et al.2015).

Taking into account the definitions of *Table 1*, we can categorize gastronomic consumers as follows (*Figure 3*) based on their intensity of interest:

Gourmet tourist: It is the most rare segment, which means that when a tourist expresses an increased interest in gastronomy, it is their primary motivation for travelling. All of their tourist activities revolve around this, so their visits special restaurants, artisans, and wine cellars.

Culinary tourist: The tourist shows a moderate level of interest in gastronomy; it is not their primary motivation, and he uses it as a complementary touristic activity to help their spend their time more actively and to broaden their horizons. Tourists who are interested in a specific destination, in the cuisine culture of a specific nation, and who gain new experiences and broaden their knowledge empirically through the consumption of local dishes and beverages, fall into this category (LONG 1998., HALL–SHARPLES 2008, PULLPHOTHONG-SOPHA 2012).

Tourists interested for rural and urban tourism: The tourist has a low-level of interest in gastronomy. On the other hand, their wishes to satisfy their needs in an unusual way so their visits artisans, gastronomic festivals. restaurants (HALL–SHARPLES, 2003).

The indifferent: They form the largest segment. They are not interested in gastronomy, so they eat at familiar places while travelling but only the most basic needs motivate them. (HALL–SHARPLES, 2003, SENGEL et al. 2015).

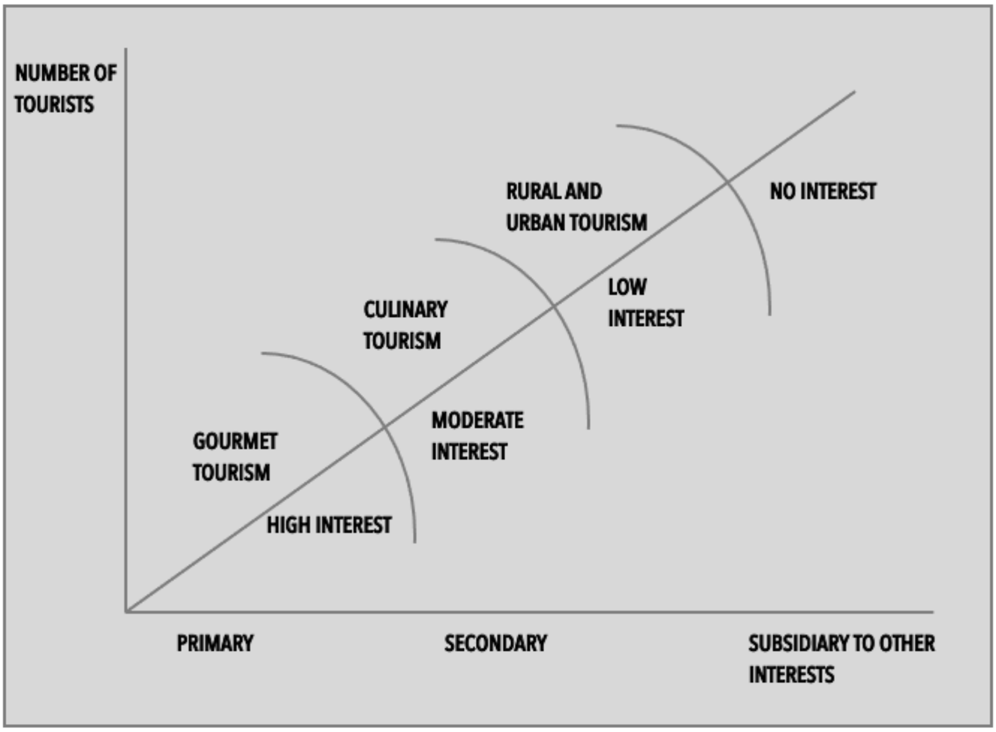

Figure 3.: Travel motivation depending on the intensity of interest
Source: Elaborated by the author based on Hall–Sharples 2003:11 (in Szakály 2020:17)

When a tourists do not satisfy their basic physical needs but their needs meet the existential level, other external and internal factors also influence them in addition to leisure time, income and socialization (MICHALKÓ 2012). „*External factors are the dishes and beverages typical of the destination* (KIM–EVES 2012, HERNANDEZ-MOGOLLON et al. 2015, MAK et al 2012, PRIVITERA–NESCI 2014, ALDERIGHI et al. 2016, SOGARI et al. 2017), *the quality of the service* (ASTUTI–HANAN 2012, GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013, NURAENIA et al.2015, JIMÉNEZ-BELTRÁN et al. 2016, CHAVARRIA–PHAKDEE-AUKSORN 2017) *and the effect of virtual societies* (HENNIG–THURAU et al. 2004, WANG 2011). *Sponsored content* (LU et al. 2014), *the credibility of various social platforms* (NO–KIM 2015, HILVERDA et al. 2017), *and* *interpersonal interaction are examples. The external factors are the emotional factors* (authentic, memorable experience, escape from everday life) (BOSANGIT et al. 2015, GÁLVEZ et al. 2017a), *the need for interpersonal contacts* (KIM–EVES 2012, SENGEL et al. 2015), *and physiological characteristics* (neophilia – attraction to trying new dishes, neophobia – a fear of trying new dishes) (KIM et al. 2009, BAAH et al. 2020)" (SZAKÁLY 2019b:p7[6]). *Figure 4* depicts the factors influencing the gastronomic tourist, motivation, and the hierarchy of human needs.

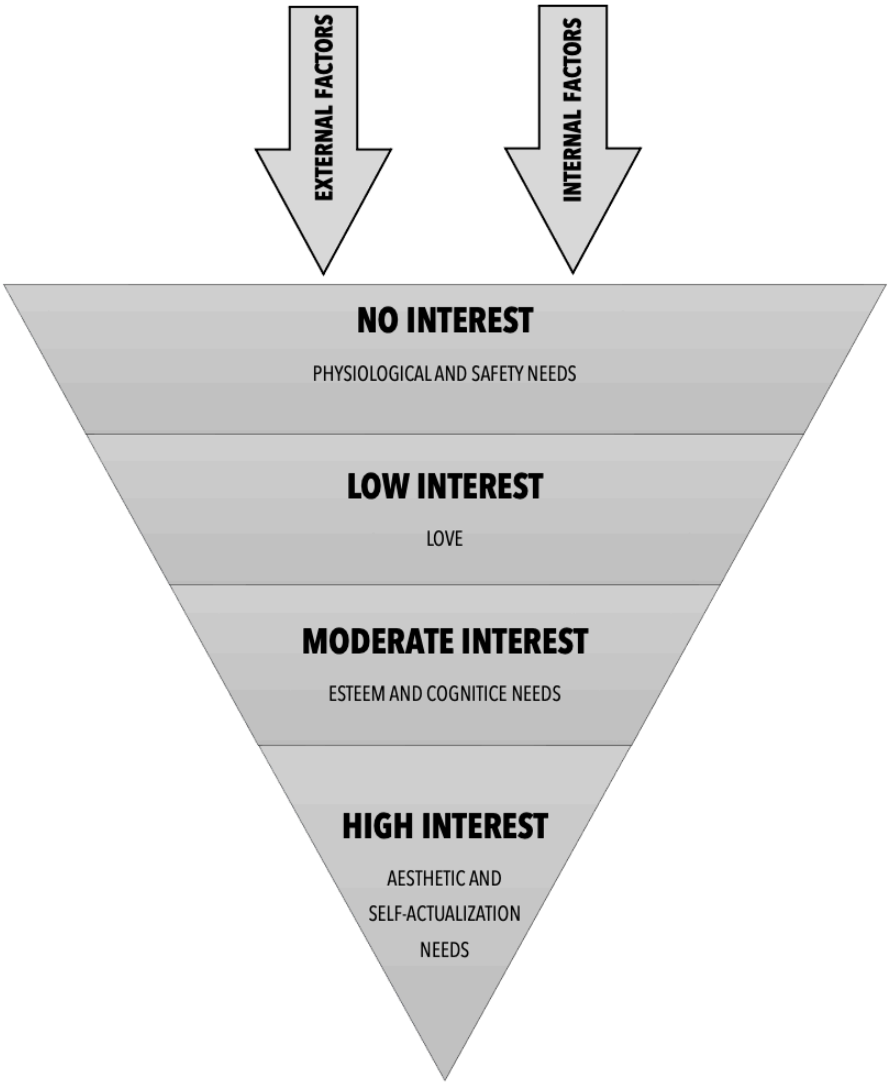

Figure 4.: Motivation of the gastronomic consumer in the hierarchical system of human needs

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Szakály 2019b:p7[6]

While analyzing the literature on gastronomic tourism, the attitudes of gastronomic consumers were defined (*Table 2*). Among the characteristics that stand out

[6] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/m580turtei_48_p7#m580turtei_48_p7

are an interest in culture, local dishes and beverages, knowledge of traditional ingredients, service quality and the influence of emotional factors. Moreover, the physiological characteristics of the consumers, their lifestyle and way of life, demographical characteristic, and their attitude toward satisfying physical needs all play important roles.

Gastronomic features	Literature
Local food and drinks, traditional ingredients, culture	Alderighi et al. (2016) Brokaj (2014), Gálvez et al. (2017b), Gheorghe et al. (2014), Gordin–Trabskaya (2013), Jiménez-Beltrán et al. (2016), Kim–Eves (2012), Hernandez-Mogollón et al. (2015), Mak et al (2012), Özdemir–Seyitoglu (2017), Privitera–Nesci (2014), Sengel et al. (2015), Sogari et al. (2017),
Quality of service (hygiene, design, sustainability, price)	Astuti–Hanan (2012), Brokaj (2014), Chavarria–Phakdee-Auksorn (2017), Cohen et al. (2014), Gheorghe et al. (2014), Gordin–Trabskaya (2013), Jiménez-Beltrán et al. (2016), Lee et al. (2014b), Nuraenia et al. (2015), Privitera–Nesci (2014), Taar (2014)
Emotional factor (authentic, memorable experience, escape from everyday life)	Brokaj (2014), Cohen et al. (2014), Gálvez et al. (2017a), Gheorghe et al. (2014), Gordin–Trabskaya (2013), Jiménez-Beltrán et al. (2016), Kalmar-Rimoczi–Lenkovics (2015), Kim et al. (2009), Kim–Eves (2012), Hernandez-Mogollón et al. (2015), Mak et al (2012), Özdemir–Seyitoglu (2017), Privitera-Nesci (2014), Sengel et al. (2015),
Self-improvement / self-expression	Cohen et al. (2014), Törőcsik–Rechnitzer (2011)
Trust and loyalty (to the product)	Cohen et al. (2014)
Interpersonal relationship	Kim–Eves (2012), Sengel et al. (2015), Taar (2014)
Physiological characteristics (neophilia, neophobia)	Kim et al. (2009)
Health-conscious lifestyle	Brokaj (2014), Cohen et al. (2014), Kim et al. (2009), Kim–Eves (2012)
Satisfying physical needs	Sengel et al. (2015),
Demographics (age, gender, etc.)	Chavarria–Phakdee-Auksorn (2017), Gálvez et al. (2017a), Kalmar-Rimoczi–Lenkovics (2015), Kim et al. (2009), Mak et al. (2012), Sogari et al. (2017), Taar (2014)
Lifestyle	Gheorghe et al. (2014), Kalmar-Rimoczi–Lenkovics (2015), Lee et al. (2014b), Törőcsik–Rechnitzer (2011)

Table 1: Literature review on the characteristics of gastronomic consumers

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Annex 1

2.4 Development of gastronomic tourism - gastronomic revolution and market trends

Gastronomy is becoming significantly important in the lives of destinations (JAMES–HALKIER 2014). Prior to the appearance of slow food (healthy, local foods free of chemicals) and fast food, it had only been experienced in gastronomic citadels such as France or Italy. However, new destinations, such as Scandinavian countries as well as Central- and East-Europe, are emerging on the gastronomic tourism scene as a result of the appearance of slow food (healthy, local foods free of chemicals) and fast food (HALL–SHARPLES 2003). While the street food branch serves simple dishes and beverages, the traders are either fixed or mobile in a specific location (food truck). Consumers with low or medium incomes are particularly targeted, and their presence is common in developing countries. On the other hand, in countries where people earn more, the spread of fast food restaurants and the strengthening of globalization are determining factors (PRVITERA–NESCI 2015). Health-consciousness and sustainability, as well as purchasing things from local producers and seeking authentic experiences, have become increasingly important in recent years as environmental and social ramifications (MTÜ 2017, COHEN et al. 2014, KIM et al. 2009).

Gastronomy is becoming increasingly important in Hungary, notwithstanding the capital's remarkable performance. As a result, we can already feel the impact of the gastronomic revolution, for example in the Káli-basin in the Lake Balaton districts, or in Villány and its environs. One of the representatives of the boom of gastronomy in the countryside is SVÉT (Stylish Countryside Restaurants) that is an organization that hosts the countryside's gastronomic initiatives (UNWTO 2017). The gastro-revolution, which can be explained as the revival of a nation's gastronomic culture, causes changes in gastronomic trends and cuisine culture in our country. It could be extended to the change of cuisine technological applications as well. Based on international culinary history, Mautner Zsófia[7] (2018), a popular influencer in national and international gastronomy, believes that a gastro-revolutionary period lasts 15-25 years, and we are currently in the second third. According to her experience, the revolution starts at the pinnacle of gastronomy and then descends to the lower levels. That is why, prior to the epidemic threat, new generation restaurants and bistros sprang up, which were managed by qualified chefs over the last decade. Furthermore, some new wave cafés and and cafeterias for breakfast have appeared and going to farmer's market has become fashionable as well. Every week, a gastronomic event takes place in Budapest now. Farm to table restaurants have sprouted up in rural areas, offering dishes prepared by local growers that meet high standards, and the conception of lakeside gastronomy typical of the „Hungarian sea" has also emerged. So we may conclude that the revolution began in Hungary in the early 2000s (MTÜ website), which is backed by the following events:

[7] She is a well-known figure in national and Hungarian gastronomy. Since 2005, she has been writing the Chili&Vanile blog.

- „*The foundation of Hungarian Gastronomic Association in 2004*
- *The issue of Culinary Charts in 2007*
- *The issue of Alexandra Restaurant Guide in 2008*
- *The foundation of Hungarian Bosuse d'Or Academy in 2009*
- *Costes receives its first Michelin star in 2010*
- *The Hungarian edition of one of the most influencal restaurant guides, Gault&Millau, was published and a 9th place on Bocuse d'Or qualification was achieved, marking Hungary's first success in the world's most prestigious chef competition in 2012*
- *The Hungarian team took first place in Bocuse d'Or Europe competition and Pannon Gastronomic Academy was founded in 2016*
- *In 2017, the Hungarian team finished fourth in the Bocuse d'Or finals and received two special awards.*
- *Onyx received its second Michelin star in 2018*" (SZAKÁLY 2019b:p2[8]).

The activity of the American group, National Restaurant Association, helps to find an answer to the question of what trends to expect on international level in the future. Since 2009, the group has conducted a survey every year in which hundreds of chefs who monitor international gastronomic trends draft the gastronomic trends for the following year. The first five international gastronomic trends of the last ten years (2009-2018) are depicted in *Table 3*. By analyzing the chart, we can see the consistent presence of locally grown ingredients, local meats and seafoods, hyper-local purchasing sources, and restaurant kitchen gardens year after year. These are the trends in Hungarian gastromedia and supply that we can increasingly observe. One of today's emerging trends is sustainability, as well as the trend connected to school meals. The latter has yet to make a strong appearance in Hungary. As a result, international gastronomic trends are predectively linked to expected Hungarian trends.

[8] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/m580turtei_46_p2#m580turtei_46_p2

Place / Year	1	2	3	4	5
2009	Locally grown ingredients	Mini desserts	Organic products	Healthy baby foods	New industrial meat cutting, pruning
2010	Locally grown ingredients	Local meat and seafood	Sustainability	Mini desserts	Locally produced wine and beer
2011	Local meat and seafood	Locally grown ingredients	Sustainability	Healthy baby foods	Hyper-local sources of supply (kitchen gardens, local cutting)
2012	Local meat and seafood	Locally grown ingredients	Healthy baby foods	Hyper-local sources of supply	Sustainability
2013	Local meat and seafood	Locally grown ingredients	Healthy baby foods	Environmental sustainability	Child nutrition
2014	Local meat and seafood	Locally grown ingredients	Environmental sustainability	Healthy baby foods	Gluten free kitchen
2015	Local meat and seafood	Locally grown ingredients	Environmental sustainability	Healthy baby foods	Natural ingredients / minimally processed foods
2016	Local meat and seafood	Fast-casual concepts defined by the chef	Locally grown ingredients	Hyper-local sources of supply	Natural ingredients / minimally processed foods
2017	Hyper-local sources of supply	Fast-casual concepts defined by the chef	Natural ingredients	Environmental sustainability	Locally grown ingredients
2018	Hyper-local sources of supply	Natural ingredients	Vegetable-centric kitchen (fresh product)	Environmental sustainability	Local meat and seafood

Table 2: Development of international gastronomic trends between 2009 and 2018
Source: Elaborated by the author based on National Restaurant Association 2009-2018

The task of National Tourism Development Strategy 2030 (hereinafter NTS 2030 or Strategy) is the foundation of a tourist changing attitude, so in addition to top gastronomic results, initiatives reaching a wider audience and clientele are also present in its development strategy such as:

- *„surveying the gastronomic supply of beaches and determining development directions*
- *surveying wine weeks, wine festivals, categorizing them based on their attractiveness, their development*
- *quality development of services offered in catering units (eg. wine supply and offer) as well as wine knowledge training*

- *surveying and developing the infrastructural situation and gastronomic supply of domestic wineries*
- *defining Hungarian wine routes and, preferably, revitalizing them*
- *mapping our pantries, in the literal sense, seeking our ingredient/ source material producers on a national level, as well as developing a collection of recipes embodying domestic tastes* (MTÜ 2017 in SZAKÁLY 2020:24).

In addition to this, Strategy emphasizes:

- the essential role of wine products, brandies, agricultural products with protected designation of origin
- and traditional products recognized under the Traditional Taste Region Program, which through their distinct features can enrich the gastronomic tourism supply

„The goal of Budapest's short-term (1-3 years) strategic development is to attract high-cost segments interested in coffee shops and wine bars, top gastronomy, „haute culture" through „haute cuisine", and this should be accomplished through heritage and culture-based marketing communication" (MTÜ 2017 in SZAKÁLY 2020:22-23).

2.5. Gastronomy as a complementary tourism product – research direction

Gastronomy may appear as a supplement to other tourist products on the tourist market. Through the development of a specific destination, the presentation of gastronomic experience plays an important role in international research. It also applies to the analysis that attempts to investigate if a so-called „memorable gastronomic experience" might influence a destination's attractiveness. (MYKLETUN–GYIMÓTHY 2010, LEE et al. 2014a, GHEORGHE et al. 2014, RABBIOSI 2016). Researchers began to focus on determining the role of gastronomy in the lives of destinations after 2000 (SZIVA et al. 2017b, OKUMUS et al. 2018). *Table 4* depicts gastronomy-related research with some highlighted examples. Analyzing the research, I agree with Ellis et al. (2018)'s conclusion that there are five dominant themes in the focus of gastronomic tourism research: motivation, culture, credibility, marketing and management, and destination development. These themes arise in specific research not independently, but as a complement to one another such as culture and destination development or marketing/management and credibility.

Author	Aim of research	Methodology	Result
Wang 2011: Exploring the factors of gatronomy blogs influencing readers' intention to taste	What aspects of gourmet blogs are crucial in predicting whether readers would try local dishes and beverages?	Survey n=329	It contains three main variable categories: (1) inspiring taste desire (that is attractiveness and experience), (2) creating taste consciousness (that is applying pictures, knowledge transfer and presenting guide lines) and (3) enlightening interpersional interaction (that is social influence and cyber influence). He wanted to point out that these potential variables can influence the readers' indirect behaviour intentions.
Kim – Eves (2012) Construction and validation of a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food	Does touristic motivation influence the consumption of local dishes and beverages in a tourist destination? – elaboration of measurement scales	Specialized literature analysis and interview with 7 expert groups. Test of scale (1-7 Likert) n=269 tourists	Five vital motivational dimensions: cultural experience, interpersonal experience, excitement, sensory attractiveness, and health problems.
Gordin – Trabskaya (2013) The role of gastronomic brands in tourist destination promotion: The case of St. Petersburg.	What effect does a gastronomic brand have on a destination's overall tourist attraction?	Expert deep interview n=12	The research showed that however appealing and popular the local products are for local people, it does not mean that tourists also find them attractive.
Alderighi et al. 2016: The impact of local food specialities on the decision to (re)visit a tourist destination: Market-expanding or business-stealing?	How do local specialties influence the appeal of tourist destinations, distinguishing between market expansion solutions and business „thefts"?	Questionnaire n=1100	Product experience has a favorable impact on the likelihood of returning to the product's place of origin as well as to other destinations (market widening effect). In contrast, correctly identifying the product's place of origin can reduce the desire to return to another destination (business theft effect). Finally, the recognition of local specialties has a positive impact only on the intention of returning to the place of origin.
Levitt et al. 2017: Examining factors influencing food tourist intentions to consume local cuisine	The goal of the study is to comprehend gastrotourists' desires and intentions regarding the consumption of local dishes.	Questionnaire n=430 restaurant consumers	Desire is the most powerful feeling that has a positive impact on feelings and self-identity, and the frequency of past behavior has a significant impact on the purpose.

Meneguel et al. 2018: The role of a high-quality restaurant in stimulating the creation and development of gastronomy tourism	What role does a Michelin-starred restaurant play in creating and developing gastronomic-tourist products?	Qualititive observation and deep interview	It has been affirmed that Michelin-starred restaurants contribute to the incentive for the creation and development of gastronomic-tourist products, as such components and qualities can be identified through an examination of the innovational process, discourse, and philosophy, which increase the product and supply side of services.
Ellis et al. 2018: What is food tourism?	The research examines and evaluates the expanding topics of tourism research in order to identify the main concepts associated with gastronomic tourism as main research themes.	Literary synopsis	The literature on catering-tourism is dominated by five themes: motivation, culture, credibility, management and marketing, and destination-orientation. Because the majority of the literature on catering-tourism defines the kitchen as a place, and in many cases it is used in contact with tourists, catering-tourism research is formulated from a cultural-antropological standpoint.
Litvin et al. 2018: A retrospective view of electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management	The aim of the article is to review the impact of eWOM on tourism, and to discuss the changes that will play a role in the future.	Literary synopsis	The authors concluded that eWOM delivered on its promise of having a big impact on the catering and tourism industries, and that it will continue to play an important role in catering marketing in the foreseeable future.
Okumus et al. 2018: Food and gastronomy research in tourism and hospitality: A bibliometric analysis	It examines the evolution of nutrition and gastronomic research in the catering and tourism industries over a 40-year period, from 1976 to 2016.	It examined 16 leading H&T periodicals with developed bibliometric analysis n=462 articles	Research results indicate that the popularization of this theme increased after the year 2000. However, the number of articles published in H&T periodicals continues to lag behind other disciplines. The majority of research was conducted using empirical and quantitative methods.
Williams et al. 2019: Attributes of Memorable Gastro-tourists' experiences	The goal of the study is to identify the characteristics and qualities of memorable gastronomic-tourist experiences.	Inductive qualitative research – triangulation: in-depth interviews and online surveys	7 qualities: (1) intentional and unintentional gastrotourists (2) travelling sections (3) feeding goal risk-taking (4) mutually beneficial tourist-host relationships (5) credibility (6) sociality (7) emotions
Berbel-Pineda, et al. (2019) Gastronomic experience as a factor of motivation in the tourist movements	A survey of satisfaction connected to a tourist destination in terms of gastronomy as tourist motivation.	Questionnaire n=325 tourists	Results show that gastronomic motivation influences the selection of tourist destination and gastronomic experience has an impact on satisfaction. Furthermore, these tourists express high levels of satisfaction with the destination's gastronomic supply, which leads to loyalty.
Baah et al. 2020: How neophilia drives international tourists' acceptance of local cuisine	How do attitudes influence tourists' personality traits in terms of nutrition?	Questionnaire n=396 tourists	The findings highlighted the crucial role of neofilia among international tourists in explaining their attitudes toward traditional dishes.

Bu et al. 2020: Digital content marketing as a catalyst for e-WOM in food tourism	The article examines how digital content marketing can create social influence and how it can lead to e-WOM in gastrotourism.	Qnline questionnaire n=707 tourists	Content enjoyment (CE) and information social impact (ISI), as well as self-expression (SE) and normal social impact (NSI), have been proven to have positive interrelations (NSI). Both NSI and ISI were positively related to content information (CI) and social interaction (SI). NSI and ISI had a positive impact on e-WOM. Between DCM and e-WOM, social effects played a leading role.

Table 3: Researches on gastronomic tourism.

Source: Elaborated by the author

Based on Hungarian research and the collaboration of various organizations, the following examples of gastronomy as a supplementary product can be shown:

- As one of the attractions of cultural tourism – in 2009, the Cultural Workgroup of Budapest conducted a survey aimed at travel motivation, and 24% of those surveyed named wine and gastronomy as an attraction (NYÚL–ÖRDÖG 2009).
- In terms of urban tourism – a survey was conducted during the repositioning of Ráday Street with the cooperation of the Municipality Budapest, Ferencváros, District XI, and Corvinus University. When it comes to international tourists, knowing the tastes of the destination is an important factor to consider when selecting a destination and 86.4% of the respondents prefer gastronomic programs (SZIVA et al. 2017a).
- During rural tourism – several thematic tours can be shown to tourists with the overall power of countryside gastronomic heritage, Hungarian agricultural products and wine regions (Szatmár-Beregi Szilvaút). Mecsek Greenway, one of the most outstanding examples of the boom in countryside gastronomy, was built upon the conception of the slow food movement and won the title „*Tourist destination built on traditions*" in EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence) in 2015. (UNWTO 2017).
- As element of profession tourism – during choosing the scene the quality of dishes and drinks is equally important both in leisure and profession tourism (KÖVES 2018).
- As a supplement of film tourism – films on gastronomy and gastro shows inspire film tourists to travel (IRIMIÁS 2017).

- Examining travel motivation among generations – for the Y generation, unique gastronomic experiences are an important criterion (FORMÁDI et al. 2019).

Gastronomic tourism is a new and rapidly growing segment of the tourism industry (GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013). Gastronomy is an important diversificational tool in defining a region, a country, or a culture (HJALAGER 2010). Overall, our gastronomic heritage is not only a cultural value, but it also plays an important role in the life of a destination. Location-specific dishes and beverages are critical components of a destination's allure. Gastronomy was a part of infrastructure for long, but today's consumers specifically visit destinations with gastrotourist goals. A gastrotourist's goal is to enrich oneself with memorable gastronomic experiences during the tour, to broaden one's gastronomic knowledge and learn about typical dishes and drinks of the destination, and to acquire knowledge by combining experience with learning. (KIVELA–CROTTS 2005, GORDIN–TABSKAYA 2013). The use of local and seasonal resources (FÜREDER–RÁTZ 2016), health-conscious diet, fair trade, and the slow food movement, which are taking hold, have become factors influencing tourists' consumption decisions (LEE et al 2014b, FÜREDER–RÁTZ 2016).

In summarizing the definitions of gastronomic tourism, each mentions the significance of experiences related to local dishes and beverages. On the other hand, authentic experiences are also important points of view for today's travellers. Finally, we can say that gastronomy is a „niche" segment of tourism that can provide authentic experiences to visitors (LONG 1998, HALLSHARPLES 2003, KIVELA–CROTTS 2005, FAO, 2008, HALL–SHARPLES 2008, UNWTO 2012, ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE 2014, PRIVITERA–NESCI 2015, DIXIT 2020). With conscious improvement and precise segmental strategy, an attractive gastronomic supply can be created for the niche segment (FÜREDER–RÁTZ 2016). Globalization can also be experienced in the field of catering, which has resulted in the opposite effect from consumers, so the knowledge of local tastes has gained weight. Litvin et al. (2018) and Bu et al. (2020) are two international studies that look at the role of electronic World of Mouth (hereinafter e-WOM) in gastronomic tourism. The literary summary of e-WOM and influencers' activities will take place in the following chapter, taking into account that influencers' activities allow consumers to discover new destinations as well as destinations to promote their gastronomy. Gastronomic influencers share their experiences through various social media platforms that are visually presented by them, making their contents more easily „consumable” and assisting in the revival of the destination's fame.

3. THE ROLE OF INFLUENCERS

Communication on social media is becoming increasingly difficult as there are many platforms and different channels available to consumers and professionals. In order to understand the mechanism of communication between consumers and professionals and the role of influencers in this, it is necessary to review the literature on the concept of e-WOM. So, before defining influencers conceptually, I consider it important to present the relationship between influencers and e-WOM. Since the focus of my research is the impact of influencers on consumers, I consider it essential to explore the topic from the e-WOM perspective. Therefore, in this chapter, literature on e-WOM and influencers is presented, as well as the role of these elements in tourism and hospitality.

3.1. E-WOM

The prominent role played by word of mouth (hereinafter WOM) communication in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior during the consumer decision-making process has been widely studied (BROW–REINGEN 1987, HARRISON-WALKER 2001). According to Harrison-Walker (2001), WOM has a greater impact on consumers than advertisements in newspapers, magazines, radio, or than personal sales. In the traditional WOM consumers collect information from their close friends, family, or relatives, which is also supported by the two-step model by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955). In line with the theory, media can influence the thinking and opinion of consumers only to some extent and in an indirect way, in two-step. Consumers primarily listen to important people from their surroundings: family members, friends, work colleagues, opinion leaders of micro-communities. But, at the same time these role models form their opinion based on the media, so WOM serves as an important source of information in the decision-making process. The advent of the Internet has provided an opportunity for the development of e-WOM by allowing consumers to share their experiences over the Internet.

E-WOM is an Internet-based informal communication that is related to a particular product, service, or its vendors, and is addressed to consumers (LITVIN et al. 2008). Thus, e-WOM is an interpersonal communication that is extended to the virtual space (social media, websites, among other), where positive and negative content is present at the same time (CSORDÁS et al. 2013) with the interplay of both roles, information seeking and information sharing (MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017). In terms of content, e-WOM can be positive and negative. In terms of origin, three types of e-WOM can be distinguished, which are identical to the traditional WOM types:

1. experiential WOM: the consumer describes his own shopping experience;
2. related WOM: under external influence, during some marketing communication activity or when the company encourages the consumer to share his experience;
3. targeted WOM: the company creates support programs specifically for opinion leaders and encourages the creation of WOM (BUGHIN et al. 2010, MARKOS-KUJBUS 2016).

To understand the central role of e-WOM, we need to shed light on the differences between WOM and e-WOM:

1. WOM is a face to face, verbal communication, whereas e-WOM is a written form in cyberspace and its effect lasts longer,
2. WOM is the form of communication between consumers and family members, while e-WOM is not linked to family members,
3. e-WOM separates the boundaries of time and place,
4. marketers can manipulate online information and user-generated content through e-WOM (WANG 2011).

From the point of view of consumer-generated content, e-WOM is becoming a basic communication tool and an indispensable source of information in this field, so it is essential to present the relationship between WOM and e-WOM concepts.

In their study Cheung–Thadani (2012) addressed the impact of e-WOM, distinguishing between two levels: market-level and individual-level. Built on literature review, a theoretical framework of e-WOM was developed (*Figure 5*), which identifies the key factors of e-WOM and explains the impact of e-WOM communication on consumer behavior.

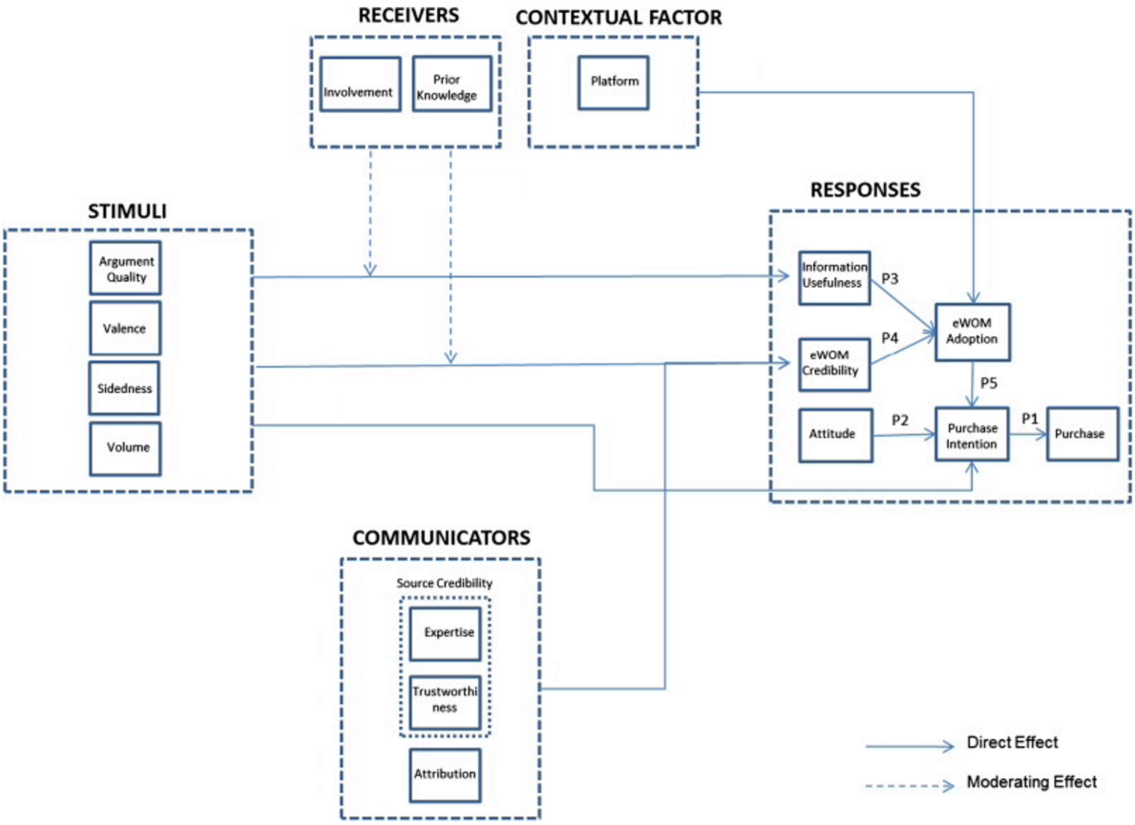

Figure 5: Theoretical framework of e-WOM
Source: Cheung–Thadani 2012:464

The model contains five main elements:

- communicators (sender): the person who transmits the content,
- content (stimuli): the message,
- the audience (receivers): the person who responds to the communication,
- the responses: the main effect, the recipient forwards it to the sender,
- contextual factor: the platform where the communication takes place (CHEUNG–THADANI 2012, NAGY et al. 2016).

Both, information seekers and sharers are involved in the process at the same time, i.e. recipients and senders as consumers. The environmental factor, such as the platform that allows the multi-directional exchange of information between consumers (Markos-Kujbus 2017), is considered the most important element since it influences the adoption of e-WOM and can also play a more important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. **In the individual-level analysis, researchers concluded that e-WOM appears as a personal influencing process in which communication between the communicator and the customer can influence the consumer's purchasing decision**

(CHEUNG–THADANI 2012). Already in this research, they highlight the fact that there are different platforms, which affect the acceptance of recommendations differently, especially if it is clearly from a different consumer and not content generated by the service provider (NAGY 2016).

Kozinets et al. (2010) suggested that as the markets change, so should the theory of marketing, which resulted in the development of WOM theory in their study (*Figure 6*). Model "A" illustrates how the basic WOM works when conversation between consumers is more important than the influence of marketers. Model "B" incorporates opinion leaders into the model, whose role is based on credibility and trust (CHEUNG–THADANI 2012). Marketers try to use the latter in advertisements and promotions. According to model "C", e-WOM communication involves multidirectional information exchange in asynchronous mode (CHEUNG–THADANI 2012). Thanks to this multidirectional exchange of information, consumers communicate with each other, and influencers stand out from these average users (KELLER–FAY 2016, GULD 2019a, KOVÁCS et al. 2019). Furthermore, Kozinets et al. (2010) highlighted that the three models operate in parallel and with overlaps.

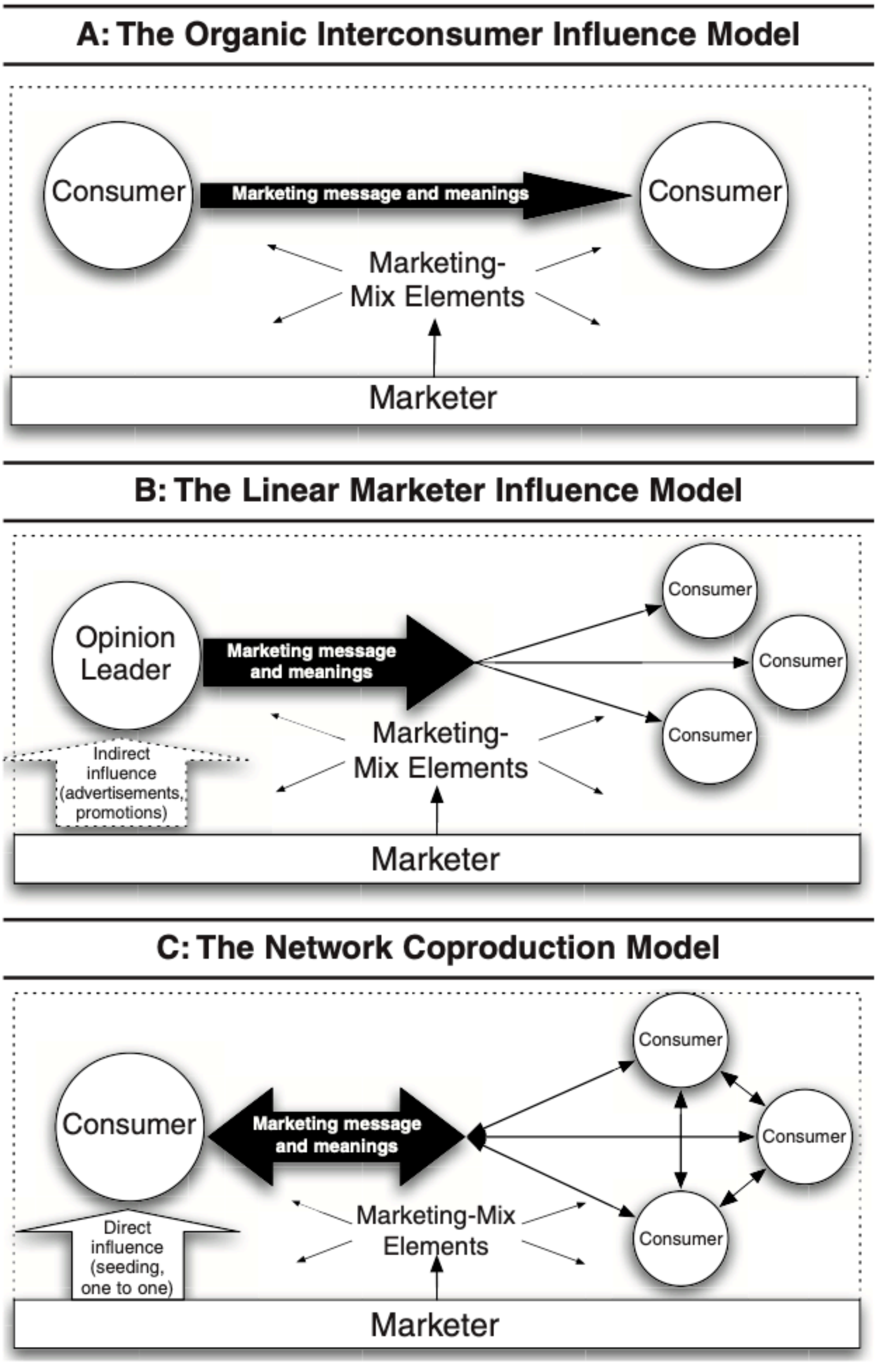

Figure 6: Evolution of WOM theory
Source: Kozinets et al. 2010:72

According to Markos-Kujbus (2016), the impact of e-WOM also brought about changes in the customer environment. The role of e-WOM from a consumer perspective can be summarized as follows:

- *"consumers become content producers, thereby contributing to the creation of information value,*
- *information on the product and competitors is made available to consumers from several sources and in large quantities,*
- *information asymmetries are reduced as consumers are able to compare competitors' offers by price and other characteristics,*
- *the free and fast flow of information between consumers continuously improves the quality of available information"* (MARKOS-KUJBUS 2016:59).

Based on the origin of e-WOM, the following can be distinguished:

- organic WOM - the individual offers about a product or service on their own, without outside influence, as he is happy with it and want to share it with others;
- amplified WOM - if there is an external influence, if the company or service provider encourages the consumer to express his opinion;
- exogenous WOM - the company or service provider identifies the main influencers and encourages them to generate content (ARMELINI–VILLANUEVA 2010, MARKOS-KUJBUS–BUZÁS 2018).

Overall, the three aforementioned theoretical models provide insights into the development and transformation of WOM, as well as on the emergence of WOM in the online space and the role of opinion leaders. Katz–Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step model first mentions opinion leaders who influence micro-communities with their opinions, whose opinions are formed on the basis of the media. Additionally, Cheung–Thadani (2012) presented the e-WOM framework and illustrated that communication takes place on a selected platform. Kozinets et al. (2010), based on the theoretical evolution of WOM, included in Model "C" the communication between consumers, from which the influencers, who influence the given micro-community with their opinions, emerge. In social media, prominent opinion leaders are referred to as **key opinion leaders** (KOL) or **influencers** (GRETZEL 2018).

3.2. Defining the concept of influencer

The literature review evidences a number of concepts that have been used as synonyms in many cases, so I will now define the conceptual definition of influencer based on the concepts I have learned.

The word influencer comes from the English term “to influence”, which means to have an effect to influence someone or something. Influencers are individuals who effect the evident or perceived decisions of consumers in social media based on their knowledge, authority, position, and relationships (GRETZEL 2018, MONORI 2018). Cheung–Thadani (2010) mentioned interpersonal communication as a new sector of e-WOM, which also appears in marketing. Influencers are arised on social platforms where, as users, they have the possibility to share their contents, opinions, and views (OLIVEIRA et al. 2020, SZAKÁLY 2022).

Uzunoglu–Misci-Kip’s (2014) study confirmed Katz–Lazarsfeld’s (1955) work, which had identified three main dimensions of **opinion leaders**: 1. personality values (related to opinion leader attributes and values); 2. competence (knowledge of certain topics); 3. strategic social location (who they know). So, based on these dimensions, opinion leaders have an influencing effect on consumer’s attitude, their competence in the topic, i.e. their expertise, as well as the extent of their level of familiarity. Overall, just as in the case of opinion leaders, influencers who usually have multiple followers are experts in a topic, thereby being able to influence consumer opinion and behavior. Uzunoglu–Misci-Kip’s (2014) study also highlighted the role of **experts** and/or **celebrity influencers** in their communication activities. **Expert influencers** are those who primarily cover specific topics and provide: advice, useful information, tips, insights behind the scenes, and feedback; based on professional experience, wisdom, and observations. **Celebrity influencers** who are themselves celebrities communicate with their fans through social media, which further enhances the celebrity’s reputation. Influencers can play a key role if consumers can identify with them according to the following criteria:

- the brands they represent;
- tone of voice, i.e. writing and communication style;
- number of followers;

- how diverse, original, and authentic the content is;
- reliability;
- popularity (FREBERG et al. 2011, UZUNOGLU–MISCI-KIP 2014).

Influencers or opinion leaders are individuals who, through online communication, influence their followers with their personal thought in a way that partially, or even completely, changes their ideas (KELLER–FAY 2016, VARGA–PANYI 2018, SZAKÁLY 2022). Internet users are also content generators, so ordinary people can become opinion leaders or online celebrities, who happen to be an effective marketing strategy in social media (XIANG–GRETZEL 2010, XU–PRATT 2018). Everyday consumers voluntarily take their opinions about products and services they are passionate about (KELLER–FAY 2016). Markus-Kujbus–Buzás (2018) distinguished two main groups based on the source of the content, the **expert** (professional or semi-professional) and an **equal consumer**. Referring to the two-stage information flow model of Katz–Lazarsfeld (1955), Gretzel (2018) posited that the task of opinion leaders and influencers is to filter information and pass it on to consumers. Guld (2019a) used two basic interpretations where the concepts of influencer and opinion leader are separated. Influencers are average consumers (KELLER–FAY 2016, KOVÁCS et al. 2019), celebrities who reach a large follower camp without professional knowledge or serious performance; whereas opinion leaders achieve wide recognition through their serious performance and professional knowledge (EHRHARDT 2018, GRETZEL 2018, GULD 2019a). According to Hofmeister-Tóth (2014:100), an opinion leader is a person who "*provides advice or information about a product or product group in informal communication on which of the many brands is the best or how a particular product can be used"*. Opinion leaders may be active in social media, but this is not their primary communication channel, but rather traditional media interfaces (KOVÁCS et al. 2019). In Hungarian, the term opinion leader appears more in political language, while in marketing communication the terms that appear are influencer or brand ambassador (celebrity who promotes a brand for financial consideration) (KOVÁCS et al. 2019). Marketing professionals have long worked with influencers who have traditionally been **celebrities**, with the goal of increasing the credibility and visibility of their ads. Celebrities that continue to have influence in social media have become the faces of some brands, while social media has produced so-called local-level influencers who attract followers through their content. They convey credibility and trustworthiness to mainstream celebrities, communicating with their followers on the social network with the utmost attention, thus building their personal brand, which gives companies and different brands a positive perception in the collaboration (HEARN–SCHOENHOFF 2016, GRETZEL 2018). Swant (2016) reported that the opinions of influencers have become almost as important to consumers as the opinions of family and friends. According to Monori (2018), the influencer is also a product that is suitable to promote a content, so it is now seen as a marketing tool.

*"In **influencer marketing**, it is a challenge for marketers to use this type of e-WOM marketing (WONG 2014, GRETZEL 2018) and to select the right influencer who have the strongest impact on the target audience to persuade them by incorporating the product or service into his communication (WONG, 2014)."* (SZAKÁLY 2022:37)

As claimed by Inkybee (2016) in Gretzel (2018) and Monori (2018), the activity of influencers is measurable and comparable. It is recommended that professionals use the following indicators when selecting influencers: number of followers, frequency of publications/content, level of engagement, and metrics based on search engine optimization. However, other factors are also considered to select influencers. These factors are the field of interest (cosmetics, fashion, travel, gastro, fitness, lifestyle, technology, other) (MORIN 2016, KOVÁCS et al. 2019) or what the channel specialize in, and which media channel is the primary, or where the influencer is most active (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Blog, Twitch, Other). De Veirman et al. (2017) identified two indicators: influencer popularity (likes, shares, comments) and number of followers. Although today groupings in terms of the number of followers is widely known, Izra (2017) proposed the following division based on the followers'number:

- micro influencers under 10,000 followers,
- macro influencers over 10,000 followers,
- mega influencers over 1,000,000 followers.

Later, Oliveira et al. (2020) in their study, defined the grouping as follows, depending on the number of followers:

- nano influencers with less than 1,000 followers,
- micro influencers with 1,000-10,000 followers,
- macro influencers with 10,000-100,000 followers,
- mega influencers with more than 100,000 followers.

The grouping by number of followers may differ from market to market (GULD 2019a) or might be influenced by other factors such as culture/subculture, language, country size and other aspects that would require separate research to be mapped. Furthermore, in addition to the interests of influencers (e.g. beauty care, gastronomy), authentic contents also influence the size of their follow-up camp (ALASSANI–GÖRETZ 2019, GULD 2019a). Thus, I will not attempt to define it in Hungary, but at the same time we can see that only 3 years have passed between the two studies and the division has already been expanded with a new conceptual element (nano influencer). At the same time, the definitions seek to bring back the size of the follow-up camps, thus clarifying the impact of reaching influencers.

Based on Gretzel 2018 in Szakály 2022 content promotion, product launch, and content creation itself are the three most important areas of influencer marketing, where marketers employ influencers. *"According to Carter (2016), influencer marketing is a fast-growing industry that seeks to promote products or increase brand awareness through content distributed by social media users who are considered influential. The perception of influencers is not clear: this kind of advertising has a productive effect on fanatical followers and a counterproductive effect on the counter-camp. However, in the majority of cases, influencers have a positive effect on consumers' purchasing intention, brand awareness, and brand trust (HUNG 2014, ALBERT et al. 2017, XU–PRATT 2018)."* (SZAKÁLY 2022:37) Measuring the success of influencer marketing is a challenge for professionals. Key metrics include follow-up tracking (such as number of new followers, clicks, likes, customer reviews, times when discount codes are used, and purchase intentions and behaviors) for both influencer and company (BROWN–FIORELLA 2013, BIAUDET 2017, JOHANSEN–GULDVIK 2017, LEE et al. 2021). Thus, the usual measurement methods for companies are ROI[9], a CPA[10], a CPV[11] and CPE[12] the dollar spent per likes, even on the influencer side, the number of followers (LEE et al. 2021).

So, it can be said that there are individuals in social media who influence consumer decision making. Furthermore, it can be said that WOM marketing with influencers is not a new trending phenomenon. However, the concept of influencer is a novelty in the field, although they were previously used in mass communication, only a different name was used for the phenomenon (opinion leader, brand ambassador).

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[9] ROI= return on investment
[10] CPA= cost per action
[11] CPV= cost per view
[12] CPE= cost per engagement

Although some literature tries to differentiate the definition of influencer and opinion leader (GULD 2019a). However, it can be said that in social media, influencing persons are defined as influencers, which is actually the result of the emergence of social media. Thus, the definition of influencer is a collective concept that can be further specified based on already known marketing practices (e.g. advertising with celebrities through mass media, involvement of professionals) (KELLER–FAY 2016, GRETZEL 2018, VARGA–PANYI 2018, KOVÁCS et al. 2019, OLIVEIRA et al. 2020). As a result, there are also differences between influencers, so grounding on literature review, they can be classified as:

1. celebrities
2. industry experts – opinion leaders
3. bloggers and content generators
4. micro influencers – they affect micro communities (GRETZEL 2018).

Overall, influencers are influencing persons (celebrities, bloggers, industry experts) whose task is filtering information, based on their own experience and beliefs, which is passed on to consumers/followers through various social media platforms, thereby inspiring them to develop a product or service consumption.

3.3. The relationship between the consumer and the influencer in the decision-making process

Central to my research, in addition to influencers, is the consumer and the consumer decision itself, which I present from the e-WOM side, building on the previous chapters.

"Decision-making is the process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired result."

(Lunenburg 2010:2)

There are three key elements to this definition. First, there are a number of options in the decision-making process. Second, these options mean more than simply selecting a final thing from the options. Finally, the desired outcome is the same as the intention/goal when the decision maker commits himself into making the final decision (LUNENBURG 2010).

Consumer behavior involves decisions, experiences, activities, and ideas that meet the needs of consumers (COHEN et al. 2014). Consumer needs represent a longer or shorter period of time in the decision-making process until a particular product or service is purchased. The duration of the decision-making process is influenced by a number of factors, such as the stages of the decision-making process. These stages are: problem recognition, information research, opportunity evaluation, purchase, post-purchase behavior, and post-purchase experience (*Figure 7*) (HOFMEISTER-TÓTH 2014, KOTLER et al. 2005, LUNENBURG 2010). During routine purchases, consumers may omit some of the listed stages in the decision-making process, however, this model is used when consumers have to make a new and complex purchasing decision.

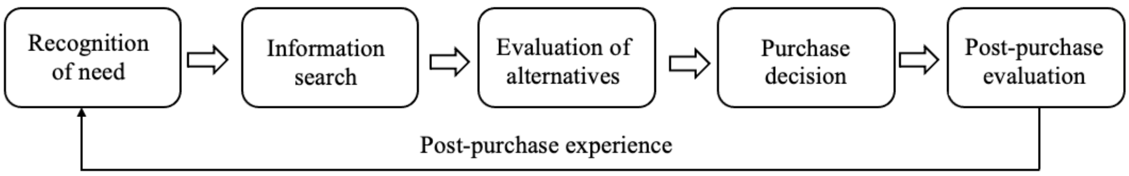

Figure 7: Stages of the consumer purchasing decision process
Source: Elaborated by the author, based on Hofmeister-Tóth 2014, Kotler et al. 2005, Lunenburg 2010

In this model, e-WOM can appear in the information research and post-purchase experience phase, as well as in the problem recognition phase, when the problem develops under the influence of social media (for example, the need to view posts with gastronomic content). The information research process can be external and internal, active or passive. Research on the World Wide Web is an active, external form of research in which consumers search for information about a particular product or service on websites, blogs, vlogs, or social media platforms. In the post-purchase experience phase, consumers are given the opportunity to express their experience of a product or service, to share their opinion on price or quality, thus helping the future customer (HOFMEISTER-TÓTH 2014). Consumers who share their experiences and encourage other consumers to shop will act as influencers on social media.

In regard to the relationship between influencers and consumers, the factors influencing the consumers present in the social media were identified after the analysis of the literature (*Table 5*). These factors include the need for interaction, easy access to the platform, protection of personal information, the need for new information, internal attitudes such as personalization, commitment, parasocialization; as well as the impact of virtual communities on consumers, the need for sponsored content, brand awareness and interpersonalism.

Factors	Literature
Interaction (feedback) / positive-negative opinions	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Hilverda (2017), No–Kim (2015), O'Leary (2011), Zhang et al (2010)
Availability (ease)	No–Kim (2015)
Security (protection of personal information)	No–Kim (2015)
An incentive to try something new	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Wang (2011), Bosangit et al. (2015)
Personalization (identification - homophilia)	Magno (2017), No–Kim (2015), Phua et al. (2017)
Unique, memorable and personal experience	Bosangit et al. (2015)
Trust and loyalty	Hilverda (2017), Jalilvand et al. (2011), No–Kim (2015), Uzunoglu–Kip (2014), Wang (2015)
Interpersonal relationship	Jalilvand et al. (2011), Wang (2011)
Commitment	Borah (2015), Hellberg (2015), Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Lu–Kip (2014), Phua et al. (2017) Uzunoglu–Kip (2014)
Transfer of new information/knowledge/Basis for decision making	Bosangit et al. (2015), Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Kim et al. (2009), Stephen–Lehmann (2016), Yuan etal (2016), Wang (2011)
Parasocial interaction (illusion of personal relationship)	Hartmann (2008)
Sponsored content (influence of companies)	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Lu et al. (2014)
Brand awareness	Lu et al. (2014), Phua et al. (2017)
Influence of virtual community	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Wang (2011)

Table 5: Factors influencing social media consumers

Forrás: Elaborated by the author based on Annex 1

When consumers express their opinions on a given topic, they expect the influencer to respond to both positive and negative opinions and comments. This type of interaction means real-time feedback and active communication between users, which is already part of the e-WOM concept (NO–KIM 2015). E-WOM is a positive or negative post available to consumers via the Internet that is posted by current, potential, or past consumers about a product, service, or company (HENNIG-THURAU et al. 2004). Consumer opinions, in addition to influencing the work of an influencer, help to get an overall picture of the product and also play an important role in reducing pre-purchase uncertainty and post-purchase regret. E-WOM is equivalent to faceless critics within the digital world, where this kind of expression offers the possibility of anonymity, which provides a certain security for the consumer (LITVIN et al. 2008, BRONNER–DE HOOG 2010).

In the areas of consumer behavior and e-WOM credibility appears to be a key factor. *"The credibility of influencers is greater than that of commercials produced by marketers, given that information provided by influencers is in many cases supported by a picture or video generated by the blogger, which reflects his own experience, ensuring quality and credibility of the information (HENNIG-THURAU et al. 2004, TÖRŐCSIK 2014). The source of credibility has a great influence on determining the use of information sources. Social media serves as an important virtual "information repository" and can be considered a more credible source than traditional sources, so from this perspective, high-quality content represents utilitarianism (MAGNO 2017)."* (SZAKÁLY 2022:37)

Bosangit et al. (2015) suggested that some social media platforms such as blogs, represent hedonistic and subjective self-reflections, where opinion leaders bring to life a story that greatly influences consumer opinion and decision as they describe their experiences. In addition to influencers, virtual communities also have a large impact on consumers, as consumers believe in their peers rather than marketers and their messages (DE VEIRMAN–HUDDERS 2019). The company can be happy if the consumer chooses his product for which the buyer expects a gift or discount in return, otherwise he will not recommend the company on opinion-sharing sites (BUHALIS–LAW 2008, TÖRŐCSIK 2014, DE VEIRMAN et al. 2017). Popular brands have already realized the communication potential of influencers, where opinion leaders portray the brand in their content, thereby encouraging their followers to try it (UZUNOGLU–MISCI-KIP 2014). However, De Veirman–Hudders (2019) asserted that content that publicizes sponsorship negatively affects consumer brand attitudes, becoming skeptical about advertising, which already has a negative impact on the influencer. Furthermore, it was found that influencers who declare that they are not in a commercial relationship with the brand also have a positive effect on consumer brand attitudes and the credibility of the influencer.

Information and communications technology (ICT) has extended to the stages of the purchasing decision process, so consumer power is also growing stronger. Consumer demand can also influence the demand for brands and services (TÖRŐCSIK 2014). For example, an influencer may visit a restaurant for sponsorship purposes. The content produced by the influencer can also be influenced by the particular restaurant, in this case we are talking about sponsored entries. In such cases, the restaurant compensates the author of the content in some way in order to influence the consumer decision-making through his personal platforms. However, this can trigger a double feeling, i.e. it can have a positive outcome when the content encourages the reader to try the particular restaurant as well, or a negative one if the reader perceives a disappointment in the post. The latter may result in the consumer visiting another influencer site in the future. As explained by Lu et al. (2014), if the influencer honestly reveals that the content is sponsored and that he is compensated for it, so he does not want to mislead the reader, then the sponsored content also becomes more acceptable to the consumer.

3.4. The role of e-WOM and influencers in tourism through consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is one of the most researched areas of marketing, closely related to the field of tourism with concepts such as traveler or tourist behavior, which are typically defined in this field (COHEN et al. 2014). Although, literature review reveals that the term is most widely studied in the field of marketing than in the field of tourism. As claimed by Cohen et al. (2014), consumer behavior in the field of tourism is studied through tourism consumption from an individual, enjoyment, and emotional perspective, and how these relate to daily and quality life in general. Emotional motivation is characteristic of tourism consumption and decision-making, and that research on personal, but consumer behavior in tourism is usually based on rationality without taking into account the enjoyment and emotional aspects of tourism consumption (DECROP–SNELDERS 2004, DIXIT 2018, DIXIT et al. 2019).

Volo (2012) pointed out a decentralized communication paradigm based on Web 2.0 that allows tourism professionals to communicate directly and in person with consumers. E-WOM provides a key source of information for tourists to make decisions (MELLINAS–REINO 2019). In addition to selecting their destinations through e-WOM channels, tourists are also an important component of this, as they prefer to share their experiences on social media platforms (BU et al. 2020). The importance, platforms, advantages and disadvantages of e-WOM as an online marketing tool for promoting tourism products and services as well as influencing consumers have been recognized by tourism professionals (LITVIN et al. 2008, HUANG 2012, MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017, HAJLI et al. 2018, MELLINAS–REINO 2019, BU et al. 2020).

Lewis–Chambers (2000) and Litvin et al. (2008) stated that emotion is an important aspect in the tourism decision-making process and explained that hospitality and tourism products are at high risk due to this emotional aspect. E-WOM can be a solution to reduce the high-risk factor of the decision-making process. In their study Litvin et al. (2008) introduced several studies that examined the positive and negative effects of WOM on tourism products. For example:

- in New Zealand a research found that negative WOM negatively affected destination image (MORGAN et al. 2003 in LITVIN et al. 2008);
- in the Caribbean a study demonstrated that hostile behavior by locals generated negative WOM and resulted in a downturn in the industry (CRICK 2003 in LITVIN et al. 2008);
- in Australia the demand for wine tourism has increased as a result of visitor WOM recommendations (O'NeILL et al. 2002 in LITVIN et al. 2008);
- a Spanish study highlighted an interesting dichotomy, a positive WOM has an incentive effect on tourist arrivals, while the expectations of incoming tourists, which have increased as a result of a positive WOM, are much more difficult to meet (DÍAZ-MARTÍN et al. 2000 in LITVIN et al. 2008);
- In their study Litvin et al. (2004) focused on the influential effect of opinion leaders on the restaurant choice habits of tourists.
- Souheila et al. (2015) determined that WOM is the most important factor in shaping the image of a destination.

The aforementioned studies have shown interesting results that support the view that consumer-generated internet content, i.e. e-WOM, has a great impact on consumers' relationship with the tourism product, so it is worthwhile to research this topic. Abubakar–Ilkan (2016) believed that e-WOM positively influences consumer confidence in a destination and promotes travel intentions.

A study conducted by Litvin et al. (2018) summarizes the trends of the last 10 years regarding the impact of e-WOM on hospitality and tourism. In a previous study, Litvin (2008) claimed that e-WOM should have a big impact on the opinions of travelers and the transmission of those opinions. In this context, Joachimsthaler's (2014, in LITVIN et al. 2018) asserted that consumers' digital habits are transformed, thereby becoming "hyper-digital" consumers, since they are always active, they are online several times a day, giving rise to the emergence of a larger segment, "mobile only" users using smartphones and tablets. This segment, along with the development of trends and technological advancements, are also transforming marketing activities related to hospitality. For instance, mobile devices are used to read reviews of catering establishments, book trips, or even "open" their hotel room doors. These tools trigger interpersonal relationships, so marketers need to adapt to this transformed communication (SZAKÁLY 2018). As suggested by Kovács et al. (2019) the emergence of new communication tools has an impact on tourism marketing, and the importance of digitalization has increased in communication activities.

Consumer tourism decisions (such as choosing a destination) are inevitably influenced by social media (KOVÁCS et al. 2019, SZAKÁLY 2022). *"As explained by Xu–Pratt (2018), it is more difficult to change the perception of tourist destinations compared to other consumer goods, however, the use of influencer can be an effective tool if, for example, a local-born celebrity presents the destination. One good example is Australia's memorable campaign, where the success of Crocodile Dundee films led to significant visitor growth (GLOVER 2009). Tourist influencer campaigns became massive in 2018."* (SZAKÁLY 2022:36)

Hospitality and tourism companies are turning to popular influencers to engage consumers as online social media has become less of a personal connection, therefore the desire for personal or interpersonal contact has strengthened. This fact provides an opportunity to meet new people on social media platforms furthermore, spend time with friends or family in a restaurant based on recommendations on the platforms (CHEUNG–THADANI 2010, JALILVAND et al. 2011, KIM–EVES 2012). Lee et al. (2021) are convinced that influencer marketing is prominent in the hospitality sector because it is cost-effective and easier to attract consumers. This is by case of service providers taking advantage of the "wow" factor that influencers accomplish with photos and videos of food. In the emerging market competition, targeted marketing of restaurants, online presence, and brand awareness may escalate consumption, however gastronomic influencers need to be knowledgeable about the industry (PATEL 2018, LEE et al. 2021, SZAKÁLY 2022).

Magno's (2017) study analyzed one element of social media, blogs, and found that blogs are more reliable and dynamic sources of information than other media sources and traditional online sources. Magno (2017) highlighted that social media platforms have a prominent impact on the decision-making process in the field of tourism, such as participation in wine or food tasting. The number of consumers seeking and sharing opinions on the various e-WOM platforms is increasing year by year, which is of paramount importance to the tourism sector, as the search for information through e-WOM is significant among tourists (JALILVAND–SAMIEI 2012, LÓPEZ–SICILIA 2014).

The factors that determine the decision-making of social media consumers interested in gastronomy are presented in *Table 6*. In the **factors** column of the table, we can see the factors influencing consumer decision-making determined on the basis of the literature. In parallel with the literature on gastronomy (Chapter 2.3), I also examined the literature dealing with social media consumers (Chapter 3.3). The content of academic articles on gastronomy has shed light on the factors that influence consumers in decision-making, such as: food and drink specific to the destination, traditional ingredients, culture, quality of service, the emotional factor, and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, the factors that may influence the decision-making of social media consumers are: the emotional factor, interpersonal relationship, interaction, personalization, credibility, parasocial interaction, sponsored content, and influence of virtual community. As can be seen in the table, the **emotional factor** and **interpersonal relationship** characteristics overlapped, so these two characteristics stand out in both the gastronomic and social media literature.

Factors	**Gastronomy**	**Social media**
Local food and drinks, traditional ingredients, culture	**X**	
Quality of service (hygiene, design, sustainability, price)	**X**	
Emotional factor (authentic, memorable experience, escape from everyday life, self-improvement)	**X**	**X**
Interpersonal relationship	**X**	**X**
Interaction (feedback) / positive-negative opinions, e-WOM		**X**
Personalization (identification - homophilia)		**X**
Credibility (availability, commitment, security and incentive)		**X**
Parasocial interaction (illusion of personal relationship)		**X**
Sponsored content (influence of companies, brand awareness)		**X**
Influence of virtual community		**X**

Table 6: Factors determining decision making for social media consumers interested in gastronomy – Summary Matrix

Sourece: Elaborated by the author, based on Tables 2 and 5

A consumer can commit to the work of an influencer on a topic that interests him or her due to multiple influences. In many cases, from the reader side, this attachment is formed into a parasocial phenomenon. Parasocial interaction can be expressed as an illusion of a personal relationship towards a known person. Influencers are able to create the illusion of a personal connection, as consumers gain insight into the everyday life of the influencer through personal stories, they can also contact him in the form of comments, and the influencer's content appears on the content of acquaintances and friends on various social media platforms. Therefore, the influencer is seen as a kind of personal friend (HARTMANN 2008). At the same time, commitment is hampered by the fact that a topic is presented by multiple influencers, but not all of them can generate a large follower camp.

The role of micro influencers in tourism is outstanding, as they produce special niche contents (GULD 2019a, GULD 2019b, KOVÁCS et al. 2019). In his research Guld (2019a) identified 7 research categories on the basis of content analysis of articles on tourism and influencers:

- *"the effective achievement of the millennial generation,*
- *the growing demand for authentic content,*
- *the rise of micro-influencer,*
- *the growing role of Instagram,*
- *direct cooperation between influencers and customers,*
- *reduction of content production costs, and*
- *inclusion of 'unknown' destinations in mainstream consumer demand"* (GULD 2019a:71).

As addressed by Magno–Cassia (2018), tourism studies have under researched the mechanism by which influencers affect their followers. Moreover, Bu et al. (2020) affirmed that studies on the relationship among e-WOM, digital content, and marketing, in a particular field of tourism such as gastronomic tourism, are rare. In relation to tourism, the assessment of the image of a given destination and its positive development has been studied, as well as the inclusion of unknown destinations in the public consciousness (GULD 2019a, YU–SUN 2019).

Overall, to conclude my chapter, the following mechanism is presented based on *Figure 7*:

- Demand develops in the consumer. This can be, for example, a general physical need (hungry), a need for interpersonal contact (meeting friends in a restaurant), or culturally and prestigious laden (*Figure 2*).
- The consumer uses social media to gather information about restaurants. At this point, consumers are affected by influencers because their opinions can inspire consumers to choose a particular place.
- After that, there are consumers who already share their experience of the restaurant during consumption and there are those who form an opinion only after the experience and share it with their followers.

However, the present research examines another mechanism when the demand for consumption is based on the post/content generated by the influencer, as the consumer desires food based on what he sees, hears and reads, or the feeling that the influencer passes through the content, to mediate. However, consumers may be present on social media sites with different levels of activity, which may also influence consumer decision, so this factor will be presented in the literature in the next chapter.

4. CONSUMER ACTIVITY

At the beginning of the chapter, I will outline the social platforms and their touristic appearance so that we can get a general idea of the contextual factor of consumer activity. Following that, I will present the concept of consumer activity and analyze the role of the phenomenon in e-WOM, as well as provide an account of the theoretical models that underpin my research model and methodology.

4.1. Consumer activity and decision making process on different platforms of social media in catering

4.1.1. Platforms of social media and consumer behaviour

Experts sought to influence consumers in various ways even before the emergence of social media, using traditional media such as newspapers, radio stations, and television channels. Since consumers can communicate with one another, the introduction of web 2.0 confronted traditional marketing communication with new challenges. As a result, consumer opinions have a greater impact on consumer decisions than company marketing activity. Communication that is based on free information and content exchange among internet users is the basis of social media (GÁLIK 2020). According to Csordás et al. (2014) in Gálik (2020), the concept of social media extends beyond web 2.0 services and includes all platforms where users can express their opinions and share other content with one another.

According to No–Kim (2015), consumers can find information on institutional online pages (state or national organizations), personal web pages (blogs), company web pages (various companies), and social media web pages (Facebook, Instagram). According to Markos-Kujbus–Gáti (2012), social media comprises the following elements: blogs, collaborative projects (Wikipedia), content sharers (Pinterest, Instagram), microblogs (Twitter), social sites (Facebook, LinkedIn), searching communities (eBay), sites containing social news (Reddit), and virtual worlds (World of Warcraft). Consumers' information searching can take place on institutional web pages (state and national organizations), personal web pages (blogs), company web pages (different companies) and social media web pages (Facebook, Instagram). Based on Markos-Kujbus–Gáti (2012), social media is made up of the following elements: blogs, collaborative projects (Wikipedia), content sharers (Pinterest, Instagram), microblogs (Twitter), social sites (Facebook, LinkedIn), searching communities (eBay), sites containing social news (Reddit) and virtual worlds (World of Warcraft). Social platforms are built on internet-based applications that allow users to share their own content, opinions, and views, allowing connections and bonds to be formed between users and services, as well as between users. Streams of information are created between each other with tuitorial and educational goals in mind (MARKOS-KUJBUS–GÁTI 2012). By the end of the 2010s, multichannel communication had evolved, allowing users to choose when, where, and how they wanted to consume content (MARKOS-KUJBUS–BUZÁS 2020).

The spread of social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) has resulted in the emergence of internet celebrities (influencers) who use their advice to influence consumers' decision-making processes (XU–PRATT 2018). From a provider's standpoint, influencers' involvement and appearance on social media are extremely important because it allows them to reach their company's target group. They can also cultivate a devoted customer base (LITVIN et al. 2008). Influencers provide up-to-date and detailed information on a variety of topics, including fashion, sports, culture, travel, and gastronomy.

The emergence of Web 2.0 brought significant changes as well as new challenges to the catering industry. Consumer opinions became the primary source of income due to the authority of the guests (SCOTT–ORLIKOWSKI 2009, NIETO-GARCIA et al. 2017). Consequently, e-WOM plays an important role in the field of catering, and its main reason from the standpoint of consumers is the reduction of the risk of untouchability (JEONG–JANG 2011, PARK–NICOLAU 2015). Based on literature analysis, more research is being conducted in the field of catering to examine the appearance of e-WOM on various platforms.

4.1.2. The apperance of social media platforms in catering research

According to Zhang et al. (2010), online reviews play a key role in the consumer decision-making process when it comes to selecting restaurants, particularly in terms of gathering information from web pages. According to their study, the goal of the research question was to determine what types of opinions drive potential guests to visit the suggested restaurant's website. Using **Dianping.com**, a popular recommendation site, they came to the conclusion that reviews about high-quality dishes, the environment, and services are related to visits to a specific restaurant's website. Price information, on the other hand, is still not relevant in the decision-making process.

The following are the primary motivations for posting on opinion-sharing websites: 1. showing concern for others, 2. expressing positive emotions, and 3. assisting the company. Based on the quantity results, Jeong-Jang (2011) discovered that consumers who have had good meal quality leave positive reviews to assist restaurants. While the expression of positive feelings about the quality of a service is motivated by positive feelings, the positive price/value rate was not included as a motivator for posting online reviews.

Tripadvisor is a popular platform for analyzing e-WOM activities related to restaurants, particularly in popular scenes such as Venice, London, and New York. Ganzaroli (2017) studied the reviews and income of restaurants in Venice and concluded that the distribution of ratings is influenced by the net effect, which is primarily related to restaurant scenes. That is to say, restaurants on the best scenes receive the highest ratings, owing to their central location and, secondarily, because the staff invites guests from the streets to the restaurants. For all the above reasons, we can conclude that the reviews of Velence's central restaurants are untrustworthy.

Another popular rating site in Anglo-Saxon countries is **Yelp,** which provides a platform for further research. The analysis of restaurant reviews focuses primarily on usefulness and entertainment. According to Park–Nicolau (2015), users consider extreme ratings to be the most useful, while reviews with photos appear to be the most entertaining on Yelp.

Research on social media platforms (such as **Facebook**) is gaining traction in the scientific world. The major purpose of Kang et al. (2014) was to highlight the benefits that Facebook fan pages may provide to their followers. According to the study, the most important advantage was the sociopsychological effect of belonging somewhere, as well as reliable information gained about specific restaurants. Gruss et al. (2017) also analysed Facebook posts about restaurants and discovered that consumers' feelings of belonging to a community have a positive impact on their devotion.

Photo analysis is a new field in social media research related to restaurants. Holmberg et al. (2016) focused on young people who posted photos of food on **Instagram**. On the one hand, the majority of photos depicted high-calorie dishes, with only 20% containing fruit or vegetables, according to the study. On the other hand, circumstances such as the location of consumption and the people present also played an important role in the photographs. In his research, Mohammad (2020) investigated the impact of the contents of local restaurants appearing on Instagram and the trend of consumer trust. During his research, he came to the conclusion that content has a positive effect on the formation of consumer trust, which enhances the efficiency of the marketing strategy of Singapur restaurants.

According to the findings of Jiang–Erdem (2017)' s **Twitter**-marketing research, 69,4 percent of the small restaurants participating in the study use Twitter for marketing purposes as a potential influencing factor in consumer decision-making.

Based on Lepkowska-White–Parsons (2019), social media can be a relatively cheap promotional device for restaurants and it provides more opportunities to assess achievement than traditional forms of media.

Based on the studies, we can conclude that individual and overall studies on various social media platforms can add color to special literature by producing interesting and valuable results. Since the development of Web 2.0 was one of the most significant technological innovations of the last decade, it enabled the rapid growth of social media sites. Several platforms have emerged, and learning about their deeper implications and conducting research on them are unavoidable (JIANG–ERDEM (2017). The research platform of the present dissertation is marked by Instagram, the selection criteria of which are detailed in Section 6.4.1.

4.2. The role of online consumer activity in e-WOM

Consumer activity was defined by Silpakit–Fisk (1985) as: The participation of the consumer refers to the active role of the consumer, which involves active behavior with the provider rather than simply being present or coming into contact with the provider's employees during the consumption of the service. Consumer role, according to Chen–Raab (2014), also comprises the consumer's action during the information service, and it serves as the foundation for both the service and the production. Yi–Gong (2013) recon that the consumer's participating role includes not only information seeking, information sharing, and responsible behavior, but also, in a specific way, personal interaction between the consumer and the provider. Consumers engage in a variety of activities on social media platforms, including content creation and consumption, knowledge sharing, communication with other users, all of which contribute to the activities of other users on social media (HEINONEN 2011). According to Lei–Law (2015), the role and impact of e-WOM in catering has grown significantly as a result of the appearance of content generated by Web 2.0 and users, and as a result, experts must monitor the communication there on a continuous basis to understand the current situation of their companies and the benefits of their competitiveness. Furthermore, they believe that the rapid and smooth integration of web sites and social media platforms enhances the long-term impact of e-WOM. They conducted content analysis in their research, analyzing 614 online opinions about 22 restaurants in Macao. As a result of the analysis, we can conclude that higher-category restaurants in Macao produced lower levels of customer satisfaction than lower-category restaurants.

Consumers' online participation is extremely important for restaurants, according to Beuscart et al. (2016), hence online research of consumer reviews is indispensable due to their influence on demand. Beuscart et al. (2016) in their research highlight that consumer opinion is influenced by factors such as the location of the catering establishment (touristically frequented district), the age of the restaurant, and its competitive situation. They also discovered that online reviews have an impact on restaurants in the medium category.

In their research, they point out that the degree of participation in e-WOM varies amongst individuals, hence they distinguish between two types of behavior on e-WOM platforms: opinion seeking behavior and opinion producing behavior. In their research, they tested a theoretical model (*Figure 8*) to see to what extent e-Wom participation may be considered a crucial element in individual decision-making, as well as the impact of source-reliability (credibility). The model's testing proved to be successful as consumers' opinion seeking behavior directly effects their opinions, and after judging the source's reliability, it indirectly influences their decisions.

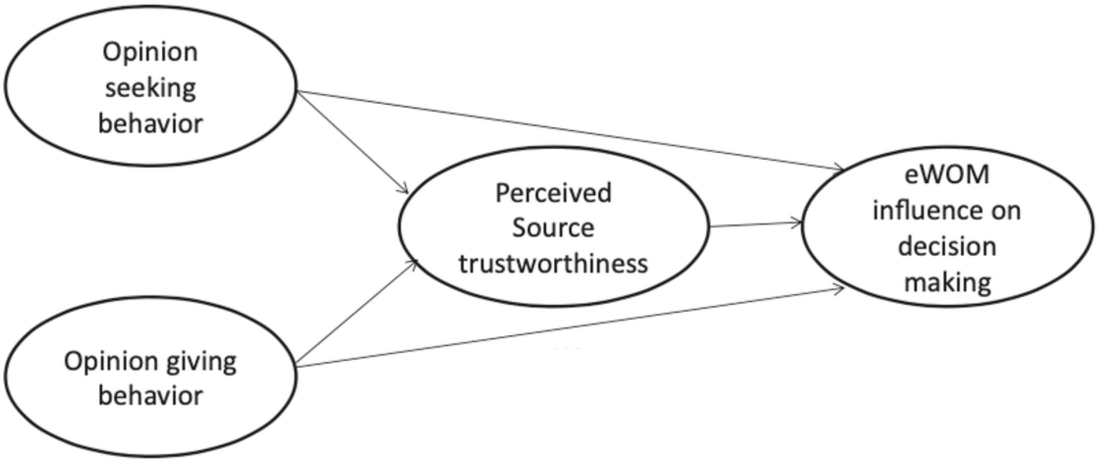

Figure 8: The impact of e-WOM on decision making
Source: López–Sicilia 2014:90

Chang et al. (2013:37) define e-WOM participation as *"the consumer's willingness to obtain information and share information with others while using the online platform.*" Mrkos-Kujbus (2017) distinguishes two types of users:

- post sharers who share their experiences, and
- lurkers (silent members) who only consume content and rarely form opinions (HEINONEN 2011, LÓPEZ–SICILIA 2014).

In contrast, Heinonen (2011) proposes in his study that customers are not always as active as we might think. The roles described above can be further subdivided based on the members' rate of interests, their degree of relationship with others, the length of membership, the individual's goals, and the revelance of the members' comments. (MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017). Dörnyei Mitev's division (2010) is relevant to the dissertation's influencer approach. They classified social media users based on their personalities, resulting in volunteer experts, real experts, advertisers, askers, and bunglers. Kozinets' division (1999) (MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017) is relevant in terms of the consumer activity side of the dissertation, where the consumers' degree of interest is centered on the community's activity or consumption. On the basis of this, we distinguish insiders, devotees, minglers, and tourists. The division is as follows, based on the frequency of participation: creator, critic, collector, joiner, and observer. Shao (2009), on the other hand, suggests that the division should be made based on differences in consumer activity, so he distinguishes between consumers whose consumption is oriented toward information and entertainment, those who participate in community development and social interaction, and those who create something through self-realisation and self-expression. Shao (2009) clarifies three concepts related to the theme:

- consumption: the consumer reads the content created by others,
- participation: they express their opinions on the contents created by others,
- production: they create and publish their own content.

The three definitions may overlap, causing consumers to engage in all three activities or a combination of two, and the activities cannot always be distinguished unequivocally. (SHAO 2009).

In the subchapters that follow, scales and models will be presented that have become necessary to incorporate based on the literary analysis in order to clarify the scale development applied in my dissertation's research section.

4.2.1. Scale of Uses and Gratification

Participants in social media play various roles depending on their activities (DEBRECENI 2017). The uses and gratification scale was developed to investigate why people use social media platforms. According to Ku et al. (2013), the Uses and Gratification Theory (hereinafter UGT) is the first theory that considers the users' action when selecting the platform, as well as the fact that users actively apply the platform to meet their specific needs. The perspective recognises that users are more active than passive media consumers (KU et al. 2013).

The theory itself has been known for a long time, as it was previously used to map radio listening and television viewing habits. Herzog (1944) investigated the different types of consumer gratification in terms of daytime radio programs. While Katz–Foulkes (1962) studied special media searches for satisfying consumers' needs, Wimmer–Dominick (1994) researcher duo was interested in consumers' media consumption habits and reasons. (DOLAN et al. 2016).

The theory was further developed as communication technology advanced, and new categories emerged (SHELDON–BRYANT 2016), so through new media-research (web 2.0), more research was born based on the gratification scale. Dolan et al. (2016) assesses consumer devotion, stating that consumers are partner members of various platforms who actively contribute to the development of social media contents. Sundar–Limperos (2013) investigated active and passive presence under the assumption that media can meet the basic needs of consumers. Their research shows that the satisfaction of needs is influenced by the users' pre-existing needs and not by media's special technological qualities. Sheldon–Bryant (2016) use the scale in their research by testing it among Instragam users and investigating the reasons for its use. According to their findings, users use platforms for interpersonal interactions, creative goals, observation, and documentation. Furthermore, the study summarizes the results of other platforms' research, concluding that while users watch television for entertainment, they use social platforms to maintain relationships. Bu et al. (2020) examine the social effect dimension of digital marketing in the context of gastronomic tourism and e-WOM communication using the scale. Plume–Slade (2018) apply the scale for the exploration of consumers' functional, hedonic and credibility-seeker motivations and as a result, they identified the points of information search, entertainment, socialization, self-expression and impression handling.

Users visit social media platforms with different aims, such as distraction (escape from problems, emotional liberation), personal contact (the social usefulness of information in conversation), personal identity (enforcing value, self-awareness) and observation. (SHELDON–BRYANT, 2016). As a result, the assumption of UGT theory is that consumers actively choose and use social platforms based on their needs. I would like to adapt the Uses and Graficitation Scale to my dissertation research theme and use it in the scale development section of research methodology.

4.2.2. The three-step factor model of consumer vaalue creation

In the study in 2013, Yi–Gong polled British citizens about several branches of service. The model developed has two dimensions: consumer participation behavior and consumer civil behavior. Following a review of the literature and an analysis of in-depth interviews, the study assumes that consumers' participation behavior is divided into four sub-categories: information search, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction. Furthermore, it is assumed that the consumers' social behavior consists of feedback, interest representation, assistance, and tolerance. Following factor analysis, the author proposes a conception creation, resulting in the creation of a three-stage factor model of value creation (*Figure 9*) (YI–GONG 2013).

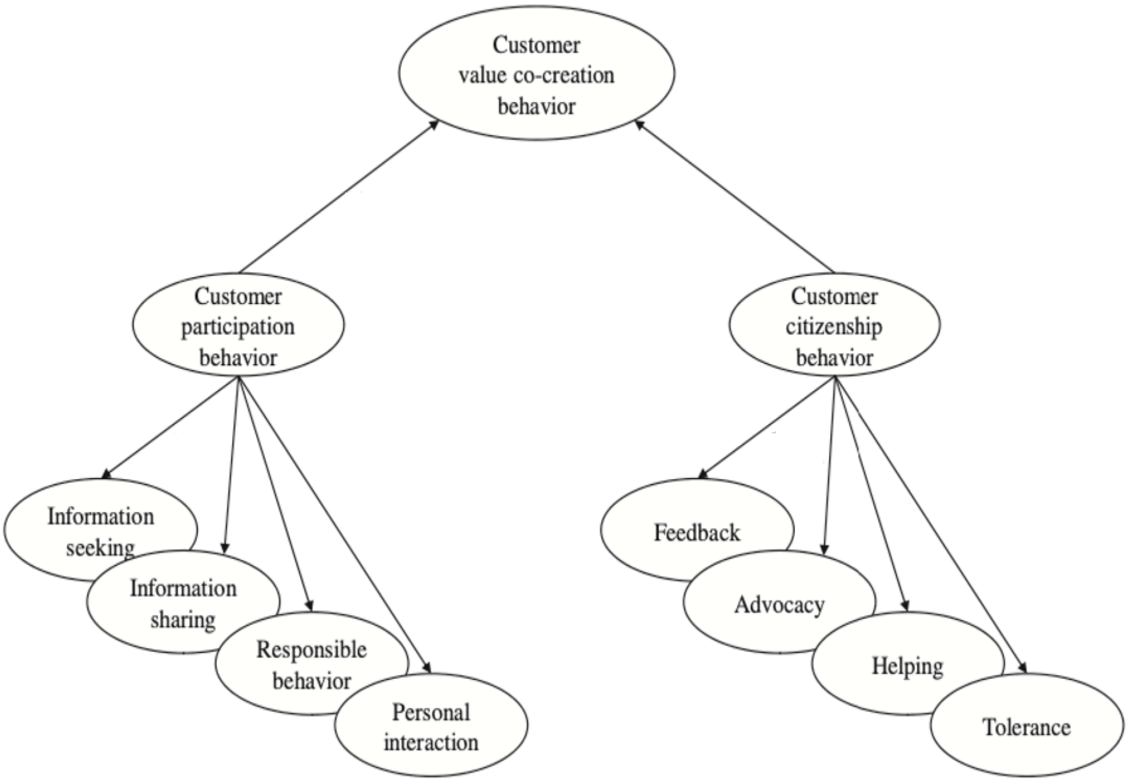

Figure 9: A three-step model of consumer value creation
Source: Yi – Gong 2013:1282

The model has been used in several studies, for example, to investigate how a company and its users can create a shared brand value in social media (CHANG 2014) or what clusters can be identified based on consumer civil behavior activity and how they can be characterized (ERCSEY 2017). The empiric research presented that consumer participation behavior and consumer civil behavior follow different patterns, produce different histories and consequences, so the application of seperate measuring instruments is needed. In terms of consumer activity, I would like to use the participation behavior section from the developed scale in my dissertation.

4.3. The consumer's intention to purchase and travel, and e-WOM

E-WOM is the most important information source that influences consumer purchasing intentions in the catering and tourism service sectors (KUMAR et al. 2020). The consumer's intention to purchase or travel can be defined as the consumer's willingness to visit a specific location. This intention is influenced by a variety of factors, including the arising costs and other information, one of which is e-WOM (CHEN et al.

2014). As a result, the actual purchase is preceded by a purchase intention that is influenced by the information received (LŐRINCZ–SULYOK 2017). E-WOM significantly reduces decision-making time (HORVÁTH–BAUER 2013). In their study, Abubakar–Ilkan (2016) investigate how e-WOM influences travel intention and trust in destinations in the field of medical tourism. According to empirical findings, online WOM influences both the trust placed in a destination and the intention to travel. In comparison to traditional channels such as travel agencies, consumers find e-WOM to be more up to date and reliable, and as a result, its influencing power is 30 times greater. (ABUBAKAR–ILKAN 2016, WANG–YU 2017). Consumers participate in online communities, which have become essential components of the knowledge-based economy (AGAG–EL-MASRY 2016). With his participation in online communities, the consumer can easily monitor the opinion formed about a product or service as well as the experiences of other consumers, which promotes the decision-making process (PHANG et al. 2013). Consumers' use of social media generates social interaction, which influences all of their decision-making process (KIM–PARK 2013, CHEUNG et al. 2014, WANG–YU 2017). Consumers' participation in social media generates social interaction, which influences all aspects of their decision-making process (KIM–PARK 2013, CHEUNG et al. 2014, WANG–YU 2017). Social interaction can be broadly defined as an action in which the individual participatest and thus influences other consumers' reviews or their decisions in relation to the product or the service (GODES et al. 2005 in WANG–YU 2017), and through which the consumer will have a high degree of probability of purchasing (WANG–YU 2017). Wang–Yu (2017) in their research observe online communication and other consumers' purchases and through this they examine their effects on consumers' purchase intentions and actual purchase behavior. The observation was divided into two sections, before and after purchase, in which they stated that both positive and negative contents significantly influence consumers' intent to buy a product, increasing the likelihood of actually purchasing something and sharing their experiences on social media sites. Purchase intention is a psychological factor that leads to actual purchasing behavior (KIM et al. 2008 in WANG–YU 2017). During the pre-purchase period, the consumer gathers information from various platforms, evaluates alternative options, and then plans their purchase intention. Following the purchase, they evaluate the product and share their thoughts on the product or service.

Since purchase intention is one of the central elements of my research question, in the following sub-chapter, I will present the theory related to the concept, the planned behavior model that serves as the foundation of my research model.

4.3.1. The theory of planned behavior

Ajzen developed the theory of planned behavior as a further development of Ajzen and Fishbein's 1980 theory of reasoned action (hereinafter TRA) (1991). The planned theory of behavior is a rational choice-based theoretical approach that explains how people make decisions. The model focuses on a person's values, attitudes, and impressions. Furthermore, it incorporates signs from the environment and society and emphasizes how their effects interact with one another. (S. GUBIK et al. 2018). While the central concept of TRA is based on intention (JANG et al. 2015), S. Gubik et al. (2018) argue that the main message of the theory of planned behavior, hereinafter TPB), is to distinguish between intention and action, as intention does not guarantee that an action will occur. While attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control influence intention, objective factors such as reaching necessary sources and possibilities influence actual action. The model refers to this as actual behavior control (*Figure 10*). (AJZEN 1991, BAYRAMOV–AGÁRDI 2018, S. GUBIK et al. 2018). The first element of the theory of planned behavior is **attitude**, which implies that a person has a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward a behavior, so the more favorable an action is for the individual, the greater the action intention (CHUNG 2016, S. GUBIK et al. 2018). The second element of the theory of planned behavior is the **subjective norm** that reflects the pressure and opinion of a society, the community (family, friends, coworkers) (AJZEN 1991, CHUNG 2016). Subjective norm means others' perceived desire for consent or refusal of a particular behavior, which means that the individual realizes a social pressure on continuing his behavior. The s**ubjective norm**, which represents the pressure and opinion of a society, the community (family, friends, coworkers), is the second element of the theory of planned behavior (AJZEN 1991, CHUNG 2016). The term "subjective norm" refers to others' perceived desire for the approval or refusal of a particular behaviour, implying that the individual is aware of social pressure to continue his activity (CHUNG 2016). This component of the concept ties together with the e-WOM theory, as consumer behavior is influenced by reviews on social media sites. The third aspect of the theory of planned behavior is **perceived behavior control**, which demonstrates whether an individual can influence specific circumstances that enlighten or constrain the completion of his planned behavior in a given situation (AJZEN 1991, CHUNG 2016). The future forecast is determined by the **intention of the behavior**. (CHUNG 2016).

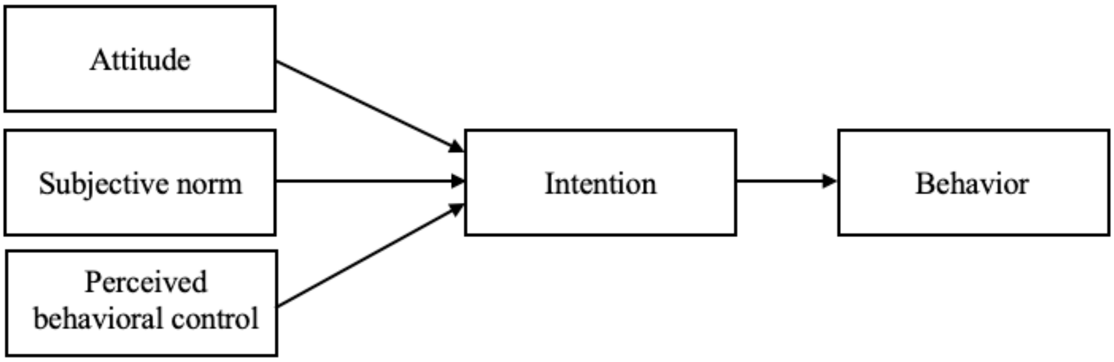

Figure 10: Theory of planned behavior
Forrás: Elaborated by the author based on S. Gubik et al. (2018) and Ajzen (2006)

The theory of planned behavior has been successfully applied in tourism and catering research, for example, when examining the impact of perceived risk on travel intention (BAYRAMOV–AGRDI 2018), tourists' travel intention to environmentally friendly destinations (AHMAD et al. 2020), or in terms of the destination's repeated visits (SOLIMAN 2019), and in gastronomic tourism when examining the intention to visit a restaurant from various perspectives (*Table 7*). So, focusing on restaurant visits, Chung (2016) examines the model's elements in terms of catering as follows: when choosing a restaurant, the role of attitude may have a positive impact on behavior intention if, for example, the consumers prefers a green restaurant because they experienced a friendly atmosphere and ate fresh and healthy food. The subjective norm factor investigates the impact on the consumer if another important person believes that supporting a green restaurant is a good thing to do and that this example should be followed (CHUNG 2016). In the context of restaurant selection, perceived behavioral control refers to consumers' awareness of factors that influence or limit the outcome of restaurant visit intention (for example, the consumers' financial situation) (CHUNG 2016), as well as whether positive or negative behavior intention influences e-WOM. If the customers' judgment is positive, they may return to the restaurant, and they recommendations may inspire other customers to do so. If the consumers' behavior intention is negative, there is a good probability they will not return to the restaurant, and they will spread negative word about it (CHUNG

2016, SALZBERG et al. 2019). As a result, the aforementioned behavior intentions have a positive and negative impact on the restaurant's business ctivity (JANI–HAN 2013).

Author	Research aim	Methodology	Result
Cheng et al. 2005: Testing the sufficiency of the theory of planned behavior: a case of customer dissatisfaction responses in restaurants	The research is aimed at the clients' intention to express dissatisfaction, using both the origial TPB model and the extendes TPB model and past behavior as supplementary variable.	Questionnaire, n=426 restaurant consumer.	They concluded that the TPB – model has a strong predictive power regarding client intentions, but that building in history did not significantly improve the predictive effect.
Kim et al. 2013: Anticipated emotion in consumers' intentions to select eco-friendly restaurants: Augmenting the theory of planned behavior	Examination of the relation between emotions and consumer behavior in terms of choosing enviroment-friendly restaurants.	Questionnaire, n=420, students aged 19-29.	According to the results, subjective norm is the best predictor of behavior intentions when it comes to choosing environmentally friendly restaurants. Attitudes can also be used as a powerful predictor. However, perceived behavior control was not a significant independent variable in the prediction of assessing TPB constructions.
Jang et al. 2015: Effects of Environmentally Friendly Perceptions on Customers' Intentions to Visit Environmentally Friendly Restaurants: An Extended Theory of Planned Behavior	The study investigates the relationship between behavior prior to environmentally conscious behavior and environmentally conscious behavior, as well as the theory of planned behavior, in order to identify consumers' behavior intentions and explain the formation of consumer behavior when intending to visit an environmentally friendly restaurant.	Questionnaire, n=347, 21 index measure with SEM modelling	With the exception of the effects of environmental anxieties on behavior intention, all of the basic dimensions had a significant impact on consumer intention.
Chung 2016: exploring customers' post-dining behavioral intentions toward green restaurants: an application of theory of planned behavior	It examines consumers' post-eating behavior intentions in relation to green restaurants based on the ecological facade created by the restaurant and TPB.	Questionnaire, n=455.	According to the completed model, if positive reviews about green restaurants are known, it has a positive impact on consumers' after-eating and revisiting intentions. The findings provided insight into consumers' decision-making processes as well as practical advice for green catering management.
Jun–Arendt 2016: Understanding healthy eating behaviors at casual dining restaurants using the extended	The study looked at the effect of psychological factors on consumers' motivation for healthy eating in restaurants. It added prototype and willingness variables to the	Online Questionnaire, with the application of SEM modelling	Based on SEM modeling, we can conclude that the prototype image had a positive impact on behavior willingness. Furthermore, emotional behavior and health status had significant and consistent

theory of planned behavior	theory of planned behavior model.		effects on behavior intention and willingness to select healthy dishes.
Ting et al. 2019: Ethnic food consumption intention at the touring destination: The national and regional perspectives using multi-group analysis	The research uses the theory of planned behavior to assess whether tourists intend to consume Dayak food when they visit Sarawak, Malaysia.	Questionnaire, n=465. PLS-SEM modelling	The results confirm the importance of Dayak dishes and can serve as a supplement to our touristic knowledge in relation to ethnical dishes.
Salzberg et al. 2019: Sustainable innovation behavior in restaurants	The study's goal is to develop an analysis model to assess the sustainability of the town's catering as well as to identify factors that influence the owners' and general managers' (owner-managers) intentions to behave more sustainably in the future.	Questionnaire, n=951.	The results suggest that three factors – prior experience, perceived behavior control, and perceived innovation qualities – substantially influence whether restaurants in the future will strive for innovations that serve sustainability.
Liao–Fang 2019: Applying an Extended Theory of Planned Behavior for Sustaining a Landscape Restaurant	It investigates the history of consumer behavior in order to explore the sustainable factors of a landscape restaurant.	Questionnaire, n=395.	Empirical results suggest that landscape sensing and preference, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control all have positive effects, with landscape sensing and preference having the most prominent positive effects on consumer behavior intention.

Table 7: Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to restaurant visit intention

Source: Elaborated by the author

Overall, this chapter contained a literary evaluation of social media consumer activity, which I investigated from the perspective of its role in e-WOM. On the basis of the reviewed study, we can conclude that examining customers' online behavior is a significant research feature because consumer opinions influence demand (BEUSCART et al. 2016). Due to their level of activity, customers' online presence may vary. (SHAO 2009, HEINONEN 2011, LÓPEZ–SICILIA 2014, MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017). In addition, the scale and models described in this chapter revealed that, in addition to activity level, attitudes, influencers, and perceived behavior control all have an impact on consumer activity.

5. SUMMARY – THE CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF THE DISSERTATION

Figure 11 shows the theotrical conception processed in the dissertation based on the literary analysis. As described in the introduction, I am particularly interested in the role of consumer **activity** on Instagram. The research begins with e-WOM, from which the role of **influencers** emerges during the analysis, so the frame system of the research is given by the impact of the opinions transferred by the influencers on consumers' **consumption intentions**, and the attitude and perceived dimensions of behavioral control. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (**attitude, perceived behavior control**). During the literary analysis, it was highlighted that, while consumer behavior when studying tourism consumption and decision-making is generally approached from an emotional standpoint, consumer behavior research is based on racionality (DECROP–SNELDERS 2004). As a result, the phenomena studied were defined, as were the roles and **activity levels** of consumers (posters-lurkers, consumption-participation-production).

Gastronomic products can arouse two types of interest. One occurs to meet physical needs, while the other is hedonic in nature and occurs when a consumer visits a restaurant with the intention of having leisure time or going on a tourist trip (so the consumer travels to another location and leaves his or her home and work environment). Many factors can influence a customer's decision-making process, including information read on online social media sites, the opinions of other consumers, and the **destination** of the restaurant itself. The consumer's willingness to participate can also be motivated by various factors such as information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, and personal interaction. The primary goal of my research was to clarify the role of consumer activity and the impact of influencers on consumers during decision-making in gastronomic tourism, with a focus on various social media platforms that are becoming popular in this field as online communication devices. In addition, I wanted to reveal whether consumer intention converts into **real consumption** or **real travel** as a result of the factors mentioned above. **Covid 19** and its inclusion in my research was not the initial concept of my dissertation, but considering that the tourism industry, particularly the hospitality industry, has suffered as a consequence of the virus's appearance, its study is indispensable. As a result, in my dissertation, I raise the question of what impact the appearance of the virus has on consumer decision-making when selecting a restaurant.

Participants in the hospitality industry switched to home delivery in many cases during the Pandemic as an alternative mode of operation (including those who had not previously dealt with delivery). With the help of various applications and online platforms, as well as the association with companies specializing in delivery (FoodPanda, Wolt), contactless home delivery has become possible (TÓTH 2020). The virus will also change consumer habits in restaurants, during which social distancing, the table thinning, and the spread of apartment restaurants will be felt, which will presumably affect hospitality in the long run (TÓTH 2020, DUBE et al. 2021). Research highlights that restaurants have introduced crisis and risk management (community distancing, operational capacity limitations - number of guests and opening hours, hygiene requirements for restaurant equipment and facilities) only through coercive rules to further reduce financial loss, and risk mitigation strategies have had an impact on consumer behavior (KIM et al. 2020b, ELSHAER 2021). Based on Hall et al. (2020), specific measures need to develop for each destination, tourism sector, and sub-sector in line with new habits aimed at doing business. Dube et al. (2021) considers that great emphasis should be placed on the design of subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises, which make up the bulk of the tourism sector (SZAKÁLY 2022).

Thus, *Figure 11* shows the theoretical model, which aims to make the theoretical framework easier to understand. The relationship system of the research model is described in detail in the methodological part of the dissertation research.

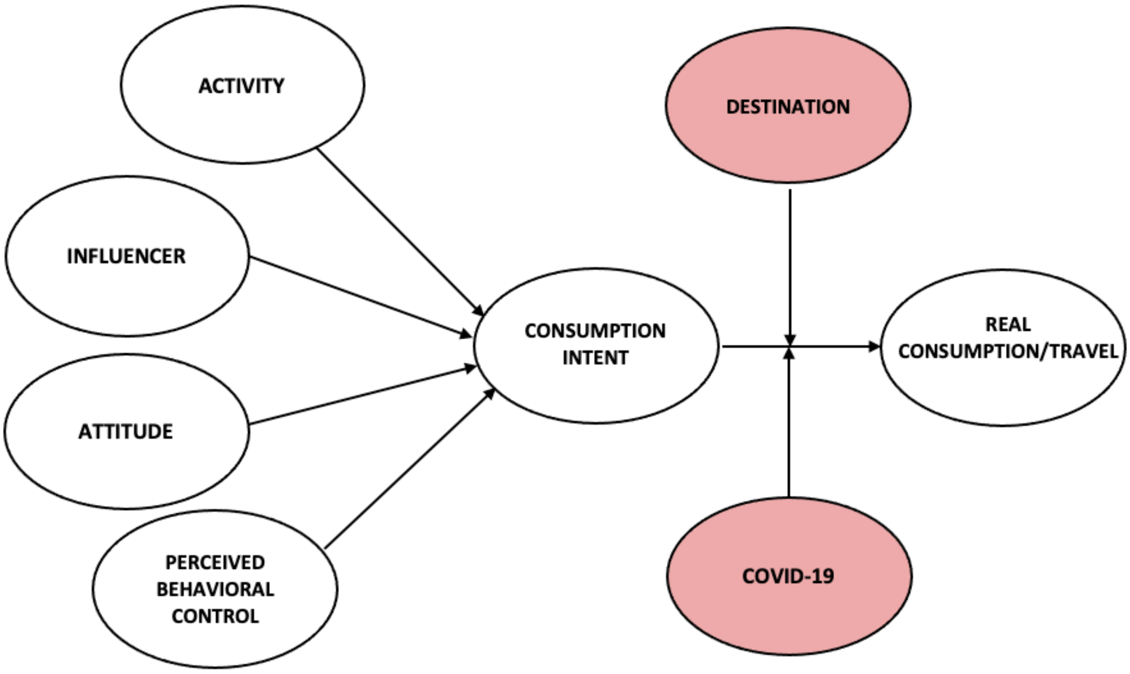

Figure 11.: Theoretical concept
Source: Elaborated by the author

6. METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, my aim is to present the research phase of the dissertation. It comprises research questions, formulation of the hypotheses, and presentation of the results.

6.1. Purpose of the research

The emergence of the Internet and social media has a prominent impact on consumer behavior from a sociopsychological perspective. Consumer communication in virtual communities also has an impact on the tourism industry. In my doctoral research, I intend to examine the influencing effect of gastronomic influencers, specifically in terms of their impact on gastronomic consumers when choosing a restaurant. Furthermore, I also examine the role of social media activity in the decision-making process. The academic goal of my research is to contribute to the expansion of the literature on the tourism aspects of consumer activity and the relationship between the consumer and the influencer. Therefore, the aim of the investigation is to test and model a theoretical concept based on a consumer survey. Furthermore, from a practical point of view, the research fills a gap in the tourism sector. On the one hand, gastronomic tourism is one of the new tourism trends of our time, and on the other hand, gastronomy plays an important role in social media, both in visual and textual terms. Therefore, the results of my research help to shed light on one of the leisure activities of consumers, gastronomy.

In my doctoral research, I extend an existing model (TPB model) with new moderators (destination and Covid-19), and within the model I also examine the relationship between gastronomic influencers and gastronomic consumption intent, which is a novel approach in the field of tourism research. Thus, based on the work of Colquitt–Zapata-Phelan (2007), it can be said that the results of my research are expected to make a high theoretical contribution in the field of tourism literature. Derived from the research goals, I formulated my research questions, whereas the research hypotheses are based on the theoretical framework.

6.2. Research questions and hypotheses

In this subsection I describe my main research question and the corresponding sub-questions, as well as the hypotheses and the respective variables of the research model, which are presented at the end of the chapter. In the description of sub-questions and hypotheses, the relationships between the variables are also presented, supported by the relevant literature. In this context, the main research question is:

How do gastronomic influencers affect the outcome of gastronomically motivated consumption intent on a social media platform called Instagram?

The background of my main research question is the following interpretive framework. The basic starting point is that the goal of the gastronomic consumer is to enrich and expand his gastronomic experience with a memorable gastronomic experience during his consumption (for example, when eating in a restaurant) and, if he travels, to get to know the typical food and drinks of the place and acquire new knowledge (KIVELA–CROTTS 2005, GORDIN–TABSKAYA 2013, DIXIT 2020).

Through various platforms, the Internet has allowed consumers to share their opinions and experiences about products and services, thus creating an opportunity for the development of e-WOM (HENNIG-THURAU et al. 2004). The exchange of views of virtual community can greatly influence the purchasing decision, which, according to Wang (2011), should not be ignored either, as virtual communities encourage consumers who are considering trying new gastronomic places. Members of the virtual communities can discuss the issues that arise and make further suggestions to the influencer about the outcome of future content. Gastronomic influencers record their experiences on social media platforms in both textual and visual ways that the reader can identify with. For example, if the consumer has not refused to learn about organic food before the purchase, in such a case, the perceived risk decreases and the consumer becomes more receptive to positive opinion (HILVERDA et al. 2016), mediated by the influencer.

Based on the aforementioned research question, the following sub-questions and hypotheses were formulated:

Q1: How does user activity affect propensity to consume on Instagram?

During the literature review (Chapter 4.2), I explain in more detail the role of online consumer activity in e-WOM and consumer roles were presented (MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017), as well as the scale of use and satisfaction and the three-step factor model of consumer value creation that can be used to measure activity. However, when reviewing the existing literature, I did not find any research that would specifically support a positive relationship between online consumer activity and consumption intent in general. Beuscart et al. (2016) examined the impact of online consumer opinion from the perspective of restaurant managers. As part of the research findings, several online consumer opinions reported that the consumer makes a decision when choosing a restaurant after considering other opinions. In their study, Lei–Law (2015) examined consumers online evaluations and how they reflect Macao's gastronomic experience. Findings show that based on positive reviews, more consumers visited a Macau café (the research did not analyze nationality, therefore, it cannot be concluded that this is the opinion of residents or tourists). Sheldon–Bryant (2016) explored consumer motivation for using the platform of Instagram and the emergence of the role of narcissism and age. Their research was based on a scale of use and satisfaction and found a positive relationship between social activity (traveling to sporting events, visiting friends) and using Instagram, platform where the event is documented. Bu et al. (2020) supported the positive relationship of normative and information society impact with e-WOM in the field of gastronomic tourism. The research highlighted the fact that due to the increase in online activity of consumers, e-WOM has become the main factor influencing tourist decision-making. From the research, we can see that there is a positive relationship between the impact of e-WOM on consumers and consumer decision. Regarding the research question, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Consumer activity on Instagram is positively related to gastronomic intent.

I hypothesize that more active consumer participation on Instagram is positively related to gastronomic consumption intent. So, I believe that users who are more active on Instagram show a greater propensity to consume in a restaurant during the decision-making process. Thus, the variable that appears in the research is the **activity** of consumers. Depending on the level of activity of consumers, it is expected that a group will be very active (posts, likes, expresses opinions) or less active (just likes the content), and there will be lurkers who are just observers on Instagram. Thus, I use the **activity level** as a moderating variable in the research.

Q2: What effect does the gastronomic influencer have on gastronomic consumption intent?

In a review of the literature, the Chapter 3 revolves around the role of influencers. However, in the field of research, I started from the part of the theory of planned behavior that deals with the subjective norm. In this research, Chung (2016) examined the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend (online and offline) using the planned behavioral theory. In his research, the subjective norm refers to the influence of individuals whose opinions impact the consumer's decision. As a result of the research, it can be said that the subjective norm is positively related to both the intention to re-consume and the recommendation. However, from this research perspective, it is important to highlight that Chung (2016) did not specifically examine the effect of influencers, but all individuals who may influence the consumer (family, friends, and opinion leaders). In this study, Gretzel (2018) analyzed the relationship among influencer marketing and tourism, citing as a result the collaboration between tourism marketers and bloggers, which has an impact on travel decision-makers. If tourism marketers make good use of the opportunity offered by influencers, it will have a positive impact on the return on investment of the marketing strategy since there will be higher demand for the destination. Ting et al. (2019) focused on tourists' intentions to consume ethnic foods based on TBP. As a result of their research, it can be said that the subjective norm is significantly related to the intention to consume food of the given nationality, and the gastronomic consumption intention of tourists can be measured on the basis of the subjective norm. In the research, the subjective norm does not explicitly denote influencers, but the research highlights the influencing effect of social media in terms of gastronomy. The following hypothesis is formulated in connection with the research question:

H2: The gastronomic influencer has a positive effect on gastronomic consumption intent.

I hypothesize that influencer has an effect on the consumer's decision-making process and that the effect of influencers on Instagram has a positive effect on the consumer's gastronomic consumption intent. The variable to be used in the research is the **influencer**.

Q3: How does the consumer's consumption attitude in a restaurant affect gastronomic consumption intent?

In examining the research, I used the attitude part of the theory of planned behavior. As explained by Chung (2016), consumer attitude has a positive effect on behavioral intent, demonstrated by consumers' intent to consume in environmentally friendly restaurants. In the course of the research, he obtained a statistically significant result by analyzing the relationship between these two variables. Similarly, Ting et al. (2019) in their research examined the relationship between subjective norm and attitude and consider in their literature that consumer attitude most determines consumer behavioral intent. The research demonstrates a positive significant relationship between attitude and consumption intention. In the same fashion, Agag–El-Masry (2016) confirmed the hypothesis that consumer attitudes have a direct and positive effect on the intention of shopping online for travel. In relation to the research question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Consumer consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent.

I assume that the consumer's consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to his behavioral intent, which influences his gastronomic intent to consume. So, the relevant variable in this case is the **attitude** of the consumer.

Q4: How does the perceived behavioral control of the consumer affect the intent of gastronomic consumption when consuming in a restaurant?

During the examination of the research, I also based the perceived behavioral control of the consumer on the theory of planned behavior. In this research, Chung (2016) found that a consumer who is less able to control his or her behavior (such as income as a demographic control) will have less behavioral intent to engage in a particular activity. His hypothesis that consumer perceived behavioral control has a significant and positive effect on postprandial behavioral intent has been confirmed. Ting et al. (2019) also explored the relationship between perceived behavioral control and consumption intention when examining the relationship between subjective norm and attitude. The research demonstrated a positive significant relationship between attitude and consumption intention. Jun–Arendt (2016) in their research determined that perceived behavioral control and behavioral intent of the consumer are both precursors to actual behavior, additionally, perceived behavioral control has an effect on consumer behavioral intent. One of the propositions of this research was significantly confirmed, which states that the greater the perceived behavioral control of the consumer over healthy eating when eating in a restaurant, the more likely the consumer is to choose a healthy menu during consumption after his or her behavioral intention. In connection with the research question, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Perceived behavioral control of the consumer towards consumption in the restaurant is positively related to the intention of gastronomic consumption.

I hypothesize that the perceived behavioral control of consumer over the consumption of the restaurant facilitates the gastronomic consumption intent, since consumer behavior is positively influenced by their self-confidence (CHUNG 2016). The variable to be used in the research is the **perceived behavioral control** of the consumer.

Q5: How does the intention to consume affect actual consumption and travel of gastronomic origin, and what is the impact of the characteristics of the destination and the emergency factors due to Covid-19 on this relationship?

Intention to consume and actual consumption are also an integral part of the theory of planned behavior. However, as shown in Section 2.3. I also explain in the chapter that gastronomically motivated consumers are willing to travel to meet their needs, so the present research is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the destination and the appearance of the coronavirus. Tommasetti et al. (2018) in their research examined the factors that influence both consumers and the choice of sustainable restaurants. Their research hypothesized intention as a key determinant of behavior. Thus, the intentional behavior acts as a direct antecedent of the behavior, in consequence, there is a close relationship between the intention and the behavior. Their hypothesis was supported by the results of their research, as the stronger the consumer's intention to eat in a sustainable restaurant, the more likely it will happen. Ting et al. (2017) aimed to analyze consumers' intention to consume traditional food from an ethnic minority in Malaysia. Their research did not aim to measure the relationship between consumption and travel intentions, but the results lead to the following important conclusion: Malays themselves only occasionally consume traditional food from other ethnic minorities, so they believe that it is important to promote food among locals and only then can food come into sight of tourists. Additionally, it was also found that consumers who are familiar with food have a stronger intent to consume, which also affects their actual consumption. The study also highlighted that a given destination can use traditional food as an attraction, which would mean a boom for tourism. Levitt et al. (2017) conducted research on travel intent, starting from the assumption that consumers who are more actively involved in a given activity go through a broader information search process and select their travel destination more carefully. So, it is believed that those who feel a stronger motivation to consume also show a desire to travel first. Levitt et al. (2017), as part of their research, segmented consumers according to their gastronomic interest. This helped to unveil the relationship between gastronomic consumption intent and travel intention, as the first group had strong gastronomic travel intent (31% of respondents), the second group had moderate motivation (48.4% of respondents), and the third group was those not affected by gastronomy (20.6% of respondents). Thus, based on their research, it can be said that the gastronomic consumption intention has a positive effect on the travel intention (79.4% of the respondents). In connection with the research question, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5a: Gastronomic consumption intent has a positive effect on the real gastronomic consumption and travel.

I assume that in the case of consumers who have a gastronomic consumption intention, their intention is materialized as real consumption or travel. The variables that appear in the research are **consumption intent** and **real consumption/travel.**

However, the role of destination and Covid-19 may also affect the relationship between intent to consume and real consumption and travel in the context of the theoretical analysis and the Coronavirus emerging in 2020. Ellish et al. (2018) interpreted the role of destination more broadly in his research. Ellish et al. (2018) believes that experience, motivation, gastronomy, the place itself and culture play a role in delimiting the destination. Therefore, in their research, gastronomic tourism is defined as a concept identical to the heritage and culture of the destination. Ellish et al. (2018) concluded that the destination is determined by history and culture from the perspective of gastronomy. Thus, the gastronomy of the destination contributes to the positioning of the destination and the creation of its image. Soliman's (2019) research is predictive in nature, focusing on tourists' intention to revisit the destination. In his work, he used an extended version of the TPB model to evaluate his hypotheses by applying PLS-SEM. The results of the research revealed that the basic variables of the TPB model (attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control) have a significant and positive effect on the intention to revisit. Furthermore, among the results, the effect of e-WOM and destination awareness should be highlighted. From the point of view of my research, the latter variables also have a significant, positive effect on travel intention in connection with a re-visit to the destination. Soliman's (2019) results are consistent with previous studies showing that knowing a destination has a positive effect on behavioral intent to visit a travel destination. Baah et al. (2020) used a three-component attitude model to examine consumers food habits and their role and impact on destination gastronomy. Bu et al. (2020) adopted the theory of use and satisfaction to examine the impact of online content on gastronomic tourism. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling. As a result of the analysis, it can be said that online content has a mediating role, and there is a positive relationship between the aforementioned variables. Based on these, my hypothesis about the destination was formulated:

H5b: The role of destination has a positive effect on the relationship between the intention of gastronomic consumption and the real consumption and travel.

So, I hypothesize that among the characteristics of the destination, factors such as the sights of the place, the gastronomic specialties, and the consequent intention to revisit have a positive effect on the relationship between gastronomic intent and real consumption and travel. Thus, it can be concluded that the **destination** will be included in the model as a moderating variable.

My previous research concept did not include a description of the virus called SARS-CoV-2 (better known as Covid-19 or coronavirus). However, since my research area concerns the hospitality industry, it is essential to include coronavirus as a variable in my research, given that the tourism industry is one of the most severely affected sectors in the economy (RAMELLI–WAGNER 2020, DUBE et al. 2021). In recent past, there have been several epidemics that have had an impact on the hospitality industry that can be compared with the damage caused by the current pandemic (KIM et al. 2020a). These include:

- Bovine spongiform encephalitis – during the 2002 epidemic, Japanese retail sales fell by 40-50% and restaurants specializing in beef experienced a drop in sales of more than 50% (FOX–PETERSON 2002, PENNINGS et al. 2002 in KIM et al. al. 2020a);
- Avian Influenza – Due to avian influenza, poultry consumption decreased by 26% in Singapore, 16% in Thailand and 15% in China in 2004 (TAHA 2007 in KIM et al. 2020a);
- Swine flu – decreased by 11% the global pork trade in 2009 during the outbreak (JOHNSON 2009 in KIM et al. 2020a);
- Salmonella infantis – salmonella is one of the most common food poisonings in the United States, however, the outbreak in 2011 affected 27 states, while the outbreak in 2014 affected 43 states and Puerto Rico (WHO 2018 in KIM et al. 2020a).

Dube et al. (2021) in their research, using data from OpenTable (an internet restaurant company that is a sister company of Booking.com), performed a comparative data analysis comparing 2019 and 2020. Research evidenced that restaurant consumption fell to 90% by 18 March 2020 compared to the previous year, when Covid-19 reached most countries and was declared a pandemic. As seen, the current pandemic affects the hospitality industry worldwide compared to previous epidemics.

Riestyaningrum et al. (2020) in their research highlight that as a result of the pandemic, consumer consumption and travel intentions have changed, and consumer confidence in the tourism sector has faltered. So, my hypothesis for Covid-19 is:

H5c: The Covid-19 epidemic negatively affects real gastronomic consumption and travel of consumers.

I assume that the consumption situation has changed as a result of the Pandemic and this will also have an effect on the consumption behavior after the Pandemic, so I use the effect of the **COVID-19** virus epidemic as a moderating variable.

Based on the literature review, as well as the formulation of the research questions and hypotheses of the dissertation, I created the research model illustrated in *Figure 12*. Therefore, based on desk research, a structural model was created in which the relationship between key factors that arise during the intent of consumption and the relationship between the intent of consumption and the real consumption can be examined.

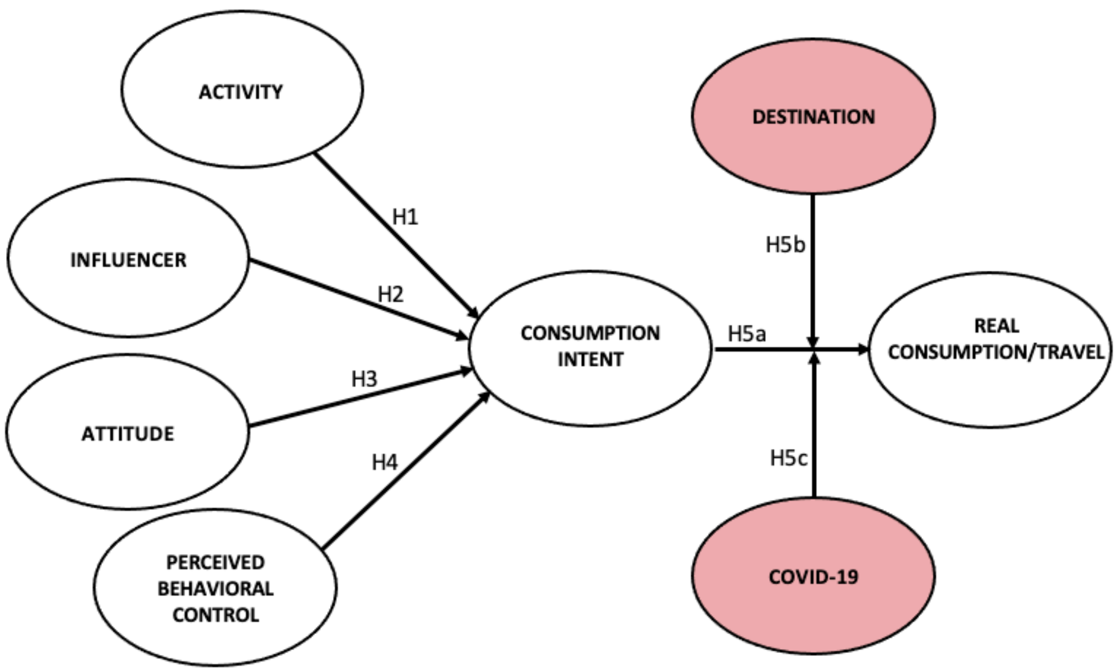

Figure 12: Research model
Source: Elaborated by the author

6.3. Research methodology

In this chapter, I present the research methodology of my dissertation, which is the framework for conducting the research. To answer the main research question: How do gastronomic influencers affect the outcome of gastronomically motivated consumption intentions on a social media platform called Instagram?, a quantitative research approach has been adopted, aimed at characterizing the studied population and quantifying the correlations. According to the study of causality, it is a descriptive research, in which I examine the strength of correlations. The data used in the research are primary in nature. Repeating the data collection required a single occasion. During the research, the data were collected by an online questionnaire (MALHOTRA–SIMON 2009, GYULAVÁRI et al. 2015). In order to present the research methodology, I will cover the following aspects:

- Determination of test substance:
  - sampling (target group, criteria, sampling method),
  - determination of the number of items (case group, control group),
  - place and time of the examination,
  - data collection methods (primary, secondary),
  - description of the examined variables (independent and dependent variables),
  - method of statistical data analysis,
- Results (BONCZ 2015).

6.4. Definition of the sampling frame

The research involves double sampling. First, the selection criteria of the respondents are determined, and then I describe the selection of the examined gastronomic influencers. In the case of the respondents, the criteria for the selection of the sample include the use of the Instagram page, as Instagram has its own influential power based on (SZAKÁLY 2019a), desk research, therefore it was conducted by interviewing those who use Instagram.

In the following subsections, the two sampling criteria mentioned above are explained. First, the prominent role of Instagram will be presented, followed by a presentation of theoretical and statistical data. Then the method of selecting gastronomic influencers is presented. Finally, the data analysis methods are presented, including the PLS-SEM route analysis which is presented in detail.

In addition to the literature analysis, I was assisted in defining the sampling framework and its criteria by focusing on the nature of communication on online platforms in relation to restaurants in Lake Balaton[13]. Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **the importance of using Instagram is outstanding, and**
- **significant presence of influencers.**

Furthermore, as the importance of the destination in the choice of restaurant plays a role in my research, in cases where the attraction of the destination is a particular restaurant, the opinion of the consumers of a restaurant is also asked.

6.4.1. Sampling criteria – the role of Instagram

"Once we find countless ready-made visual materials (films, photos, animations, etc.) in the virtual space, and we can create them ourselves in the visual world, we can discuss the growing influence of visuality as a megatrend, especially the consequences such as the declining role of the written language. Managing your offline/online presence is not a problem today, bouncing from one space to another, taking advantage of both."

(REKETTYE et al. 2016:p11[14])

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms, running on both smart devices and computers, and already has more than a billion active users. Its interface allows users to share photos and videos in the form of posts that disappear in up to 24 hours. On the Instagram community page, users can:

- follow each other,
- mark other users in posts with at (@),
- comment on posts,
- like posts,

[13] the results of the research were published in Atlas Tourism and Leisure Review 3
[14] Source: https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/dj81bam_68_p11#dj81bam_68_p11

- send private messages,
- save posts free for future use,
- add hashtags (#) to display content from users' searches that they don't otherwise follow,
- add location, which help users to find their way around in a place (such as a tourist attraction, restaurant),
- choose whether their profile is for public or private use,
- or create groups so that only a specific tracking base can follow a given content.

The most important platforms for influencer marketing, according to marketers, are Instagram (89%), Facebook and Twitter (70-70%), YouTube (59%), blogs (48%) and Snapchat (45%) (GRETZEL 2018). As explained by Kovács et al. (2019), there are two trends in influencer marketing that also affect tourism, one is the strengthening of the role of micro influencers, and the other is the transition from YouTube to Instagram. According to Rakuten Marketing's (2019) Influencer Marketing Report, 65% of consumers prefer Instagram as a social media platform, a result greatly influenced by the availability of image and video content. Moreover, Guttmann's (2018) summary shows that the global spending on marketing activities related to Instagram influencers, or "Instagrammers," reached $ 5.76 billion in 2018, and that number is projected to increase to $ 8.08 billion by the end of 2020 (*Figure 13*).

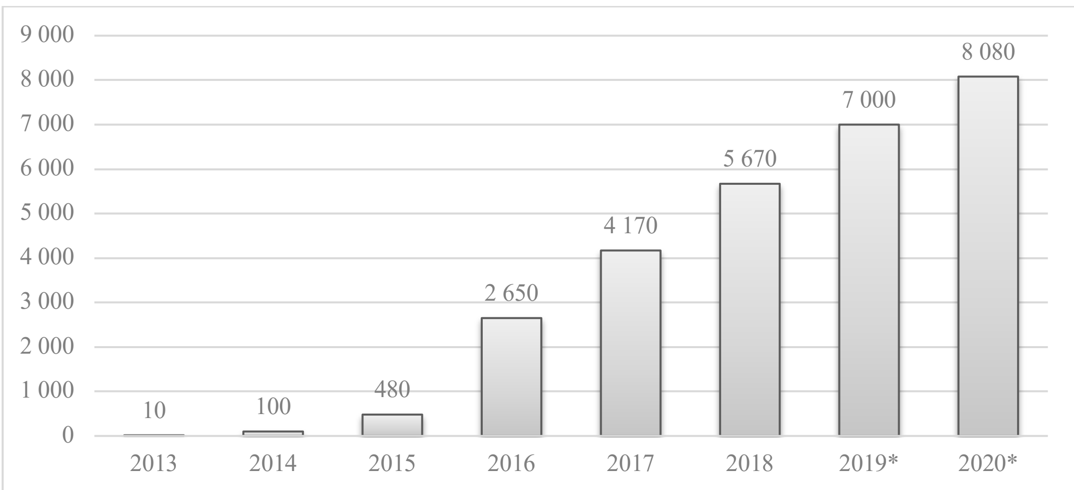

Figure 13: Global spending on Instagram Influencer Marketing (in $ million)
Source: Guttman, 2018
** Expected value based on forecasts*

The growth in Instagram influencer marketing is also supported by the increase in the number of sponsored contents. According to Clement's (2019) data, the value of sponsored content was \$ 1.26 million in 2016, rising to \$ 3.7 million by 2018 and projected to reach \$ 6.12 million by 2020 (*Figure 14*).

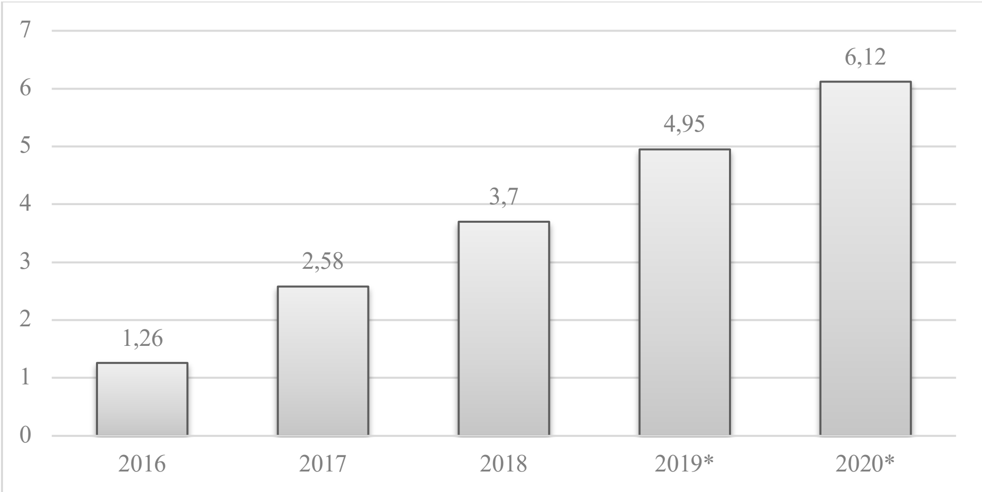

Figure 14: Growth in sponsored content on Instagram (\$ million)
Source: Clement, 2019
**Expected value based on forecasts*

Several studies related to Instagram (DJAFAROVA–RUSHWORTH 2017, CASALÓ 2018, KIM–KIM 2019, YU–SUN 2019) also highlight that the success of influencers is due to the unique, authentic content. Research focuses on the fashion industry (CASALÓ 2018, SUDHA–SHEENA 2017), visualization (LEE et al. 2015, HOLMBERG et al. 2016, PITTMAN–REICH 2016), differences between sectors (ERKAN 2015), age distribution (PITTMAN–REICH 2016) and the use of hashtags (GUIDRY et al. 2015, ERZ et al. 2018).

6.4.2. Selection of influencers

The selection of gastronomic influencers is necessary because those who follow them will be interviewed. In the case of the selection of gastronomic influencers, sampling is arbitrary, as I do not have a statistical statement that would analyze or rank the activity of gastronomic influencers. StarNgage (2020) is an online portal and online marketplace that helps different brands and influencers from different social platforms to work together. The portal ranks influencers based on the number of followers and interests, so the site allows users to rank influencers by country and topic. However, a disadvantage of this ranking is that influencers have multiple interests and cannot be separated. So not only gastronomy but also lifestyle, fitness, beauty care and more appear in their interests. I examined the ranking of StarNgage's top 100 influencers in Hungary based on the nature of the influencer's posts and selected only those influencers who also go to restaurants and travel for this purpose. *Table 8* reflects the influencer ranking corresponding to November 2020.

@ username on Instagram	**Person/service provider/other**	**Interests**	**Based on the nature of the posts**	**Number of followers**
Fördős Zé (@fordos_ze)	person	gastronomy, chef	yes	190 K
Jokuti 'Vilagevo' András (@jokuti)	person	gastronomy, restaurant	yes	19,1 K
Dora Iklodi (@doraiklodi)	person	gastronomy, cooking, chef	yes	15,9 K
Szauer Judit Gasztro PR (@gasztro_pr)	person	travel, photography, cooking, gastronomy	yes	14,8 K
Tom Budafoki (@_airchef_)	person	gastronomy, chef	yes	10,5 K
Nóra Puskás (@puskasnori)	person	gastronomy, chef	yes	4,5 K

Table 8: Hungarian influencers sampled by StarNgager influencer ranking
Source: Elaborated by the author based on SartNgage November 2020 data
Note: Table is based on StarNgage text and data

The result based on StarNgage's ranking is partly the same as the observation I made on Instagram. *Table 9* shows the gastronomic influencers I observed.

Influencer's name	@ username on Instagram	Number of posts	Number of followers	Nature of posts
Fördős Zé	@fordos_ze	1533	252 K	cooking – chef
Sárközi Ákos	@sarkozi_akos	448	147 K	cooking – chef
Wossala Rozina	@rozinawossala	1484	102 K	cooking – chef
Mautner Zsófia	@chilivanilia	3499	62,5 K	cookbook writer, restaurant recommendation
Szauer Judit	@balatonigasztroterkep @gasztro_pr	1294 1891	42,2 K 17,5 K	gastronomy marketing, restaurant recommendation
Jókuti András	@jokuti	5469	26 K	travel and gastronomy, restaurant recommendation
Sinkó Lilla	@sinli_food	571	10,7 K	healthy lifestyle - cooking, rarely recommending a restaurant
Kulcsár Lili	@breakfastloverlili	890	10,5 K	travel and gastronomy, restaurant recommendation
Horváth Karolina	@gastrolin_	677	3953	lifestyle - cooking, rarely recommending a restaurant
Varga Sára	@avargasari, @socially_budapest	393 346	2472 2881	gastronomy marketing, restaurant recommendation
Miskey Melinda	@gastrotherapym	538	2791	travel and gastronomy, restaurant recommendation

Table 9: Gastronomic influencers

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Instagram August 2021 data

When selecting gastronomic influencers, I kept in mind the following aspects:

- the gastronomic theme of the influencer is mostly focused on restaurants – this is also important because many people share content related to cooking and lifestyle;
- the contents of the influencer related to restaurants should not be concentrated only in Budapest.

The gastronomic influencers who meet the defined criteria are shown in *Table 10.*

Influencer's name	@ username onInstagram	Number of posts	Number of followers	Nature of posts
Mautner Zsófia	@chilivanilia	3499	62,5 E	cookbook writer, restaurant recommendation
Szauer Judit	@balatonigasztroterkep @gasztro_pr	1294 1891	42,2 E 17,5 E	gastronomy marketing, restaurant recommendation
Jókuti András	@jokuti	5469	26 E	travel and gastronomy, restaurant recommendation
Kulcsár Lili	@breakfastloverlili	890	10,5 E	travel and gastronomy, restaurant recommendation

Table 10: Pre-selected Hungarian gastronomic influencers

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Instagram August 2021 data

Eventually, only two influencers of the four mentioned in *Table 10* were selected: Judit Szauer and András Jókuti, for the following reasons:

- the active presence of both influencers on the Instagram platform, posting from restaurants even during the coronavirus.
- both influencers mention the studied restaurant in their Instagram page. The chosen restaurant is the attraction of the destination and the tourists travel to Encs specifically for the restaurant (for more details see section 6.4.3).

The activities of the selected Instagram influencers can be summarized as follows:

- Judit Szauer: @gasztro_pr – first post: 14/05/2014; @balatonigasztroterkep – first post: 01/27/2016

Her influence's marketing activities focus on the gastronomic offer of Lake Balaton, but she also introduces her followers to restaurants from different parts of the country and from Budapest. The creation of the gastro map of Lake Balaton (on paper and digitally in the form of an application) is also one of her activities.

- András Jókuti: @jokuti – first post: 04/08/2012

He is one of the first Hungarian gastronomic influencers, who, in addition to presenting the gastronomic possibilities of Hungary, also introduces his followers to international restaurants.

6.4.3. Restaurant selection

During the selection, I considered the ranking of the Dining Guide, which advertises the best restaurants in the country every year. According to the Dining Guide's evaluation, in 2020, "Anyukám mondta" from Encs was awarded as the Rural Restaurant of the Year. Prior to that, it first appeared on the Dining Guide's top list in 2010, where it earned the Second Best Small Restaurant award.

The restaurant "Anyukám mondta" is located in Encs Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, in the valley of the river Hernád, 214 km from the capital and 40 km from Miskolc. It can be approached from Budapest on the main road 3 and from Tokaj on the main road 39. It is bordered by the Zemplén Mountains and the Cserhá. Based on this, it can be said that the restaurant is not located in a frequented area of tourist destinations.

So, my research also included consumers who have already been to the named restaurant and have an Instagram user account. From the point of view of my research, this segment is important in order to include in the sample consumers who have a targeted gastronomic consumption intent.

6.5. Primary research method – questionnaire survey

As part of the primary research, I used an online questionnaire in order to test the hypotheses and to answer my research question. The questionnaire survey is a popular tool in social research methods, in which we interview respondents from a basic population (ZÁTORI 2014). The advantages of the questionnaire survey rely on the low cost, the large amount of data available and the standardization and reliability of the data obtained. One disadvantage though is that it is artificial and superficial, and its validity is weaker (ZÁTORI 2014).

According to Malhotra–Simon (2009), there is no a pre-established structure to follow for creating the questionnaire, but the ability to compile the questionnaire can be acquired in practice. In the course of my research, I relied on the good practice of quantitative research conducted by the Department of Tourism of the Corvinus University of Budapest, in which I myself was able to participate. When designing the questionnaire, I followed the steps proposed by Malhotra–Simon (2009):

- defining the questioning method and the content of the questions,
- formulating the questions/statements so that the respondent can and wants to answer the questions/statements,
- ordering questions/statements in order,
- preparation of the questionnaire,
- testing the questionnaire.

I delivered the online questionnaire specifically to consumers who use Instagram, involving named gastronomic influencers. The sampling criterion focuses on two elements: the use of Instagram and the tracking of selected influencers. As the questionnaire was specifically targeted at Instagram users who follow selected influencers, the criteria were met. When designing the questionnaire, I was careful to maintain the interest of the respondents, thus minimizing the chances of them not completing the questionnaire. Therefore, I used structured selective and alternative closed questions as well as scale questions. Regarding the structure of the questionnaire, it can be divided into three units:

- filtering issues - among the consumers of the restaurant,
- scale statements - grouped as follows:
  - activity statements,
  - claims related to influencer,
  - attitude statements,
  - statements about perceived behavioral control,
  - destination claims,
  - claims related to consumption intent and real consumption and travel,
- demographic issues.

Thus, the majority of the questionnaire consisted of scale questions that were used to test the hypotheses. Relying on desk research, I used a non-comparative, itemized evaluation scaling technique, so I measured the strength of the statements of the hypotheses with the 5-point Likert scale. In the case of the attitude hypothesis, I used a 5-point semantic differential scale (GYULAVÁRI et al. 2015, MALHOTRA–SIMON 2009). Furthermore, I have sought clarity in formulating the questions. The questionnaire **was preceded by a small sample survey (N=19)** to explore and eliminate potential problems and increase validity. The test results are presented in section 4.6.

Sampling is structured as follows:

- definition of the population (target group): Instagram users;
- definition of the sampling frame:
  - users following selected influencers,
  - guests of the selected restaurant who have an Instagram user account;
- sampling method: online sampling, panel based on voluntary participation;
- expected sample size: 10 times the maximum number of indicators that meet the PLS-SEM data analysis criterion (HENSELER et al. 2009) which means 370 paricipants;

- the place of the survey: the survey was carried out online – in the case of followers of influencers, the Instagram interface of the influencers, in the case of a restaurant, the Facebook group of the restaurant;
- the time of the survey: April–July 2021 (GYULAVÁRI et al. 2015, MALHOTRA–SIMON 2009).

Data were analyzed using the SmartPLS 3.0 software.

6.6. Presentation of scale development based on applied variables

Scale development is key in the process of my research as it determines the content validity of my research. In terms of validity, I use scales that are validated during scale development. The scales were determined based on the variables indicated in the measurement model. In this chapter, I describe the phases of scale development of the research along the variables. The scale of my research was developed through the following stages:

1. **Literature study** – definition, operationalization and review of previous research and existing scales. It is presented in more detail in section 6.6.1.
2. **Defense of the dissertation draft** – On October 14, 2020, the jury got to know and accepted the model and the variables. Two proposals have been made for the model:
    - examining the impact of the destination, and
    - the role of the coronavirus.

   Taking into account the opinion of the committee, both destination and coronavirus were included as moderating variables in the measurement model.
3. **Expert analysis** - On February 3, 2021, I asked the sixteen members of the Marketing Institute of the Corvinus University of Budapest who are familiar either in the research methodology or in the topic to share their comment regarding on the planned questionnaire. The request was accepted by seven members and their comments were submitted in writing and/or orally by February 23, 2021. In summary, the experts made the following suggestions:
    - Instead of a 7-point Likert scale, use the 5-point Likert scale.

- When measuring variables, use 4 or 5 statements instead of 3.
- Refinement and clarification of the destination statements. Suggestions for formulating the statements.
- The use of the expersion of in the near future as a time-determinimg claims for consumption intent

4. **Testing the questionnaire** - Prior to the research, the questionnaire was tested between 19.03.2021 and 26.03.2021 among the students of the Master's degree in Marketing. The questionnaire was completed by 16 students. Testing was conducted online, and the questionnaire was rated on a 5-point Likert scale based on the following criteria:
   - the degree of clarity of the questions and answers of the questionnaire (where 1 – not at all understandable, 5 – completely understandable): the respondents gave an average score of 4.37, based on which it can be said that the questions and answers of the questionnaire were clear to the respondents;
   - the degree of difficulty of the statements in the questionnaire (where 1 – difficult to answer, 5 – easy to answer): respondents considered the statements in the questionnaire to be easy to answer, based on a score of 3.81;
   - the length of the questionnaire (where 1 – long, 5 – short): the time required for the questionnaire was estimated to be 3.62 on average, which is still an acceptable value

   Completing the testing online was a particularly important consideration, as the final questionnaire was also completed online. Therefore, the testers had the opportunity to comment and share their comments on the questionnaire, during which I received the following feedback:
   - Positive feedback: a thorough, well-thought-out, easy-to-read and easy-to-understand questionnaire that is appropriate (in time) for respondents.
   - Need to be changed: issues related to the Covid-19 period should be better highlighted and a filter question should be used.

- Opinions on the topic: the respondents found the topic interesting and thoughtful about the impact of influencers on respondents and others.

Based on the opinions, it can be said that the feedback generated during the testing of the questionnaire confirms the Likert-scale measurement, the language of the questionnaire is fluent, and the time-consumption is acceptable. Among the tasks that need to be changed there is **the highlighting of issues related to the coronavirus**, which has been modified in the questionnaire.

Respondents also missed the **filter questions** that were not yet included in the testing version of the questionnaire. Partly because the questionnaire is divided on the side of influencers, so it is not necessary to filter whether the respondent follows a gastronomic influencer, however it is important which influencer side you filled in the questionnaire on, so it was included as a filter question in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire for the restaurant consumers included a question on whether the consumer uses Instagram or follows gastronomic influencer as a filtering question.

Overall, the topic of the questionnaire was found to be interesting by the respondents and the fact that influencers have an influence on consumer decisions was not taken into account prior to the research. Furthermore, feedback on the topic confirmed the relevance of my topic that gastronomic influencers play an important role in consumer decision making. My concern on whether the respondent would be able to distinguish between statements of intent to consume and statements of real consumption and travel based on the chronology of the action, proved unfounded. The respondents did not have any difficulty in interpreting the statements. After testing, I finalized my questionnaire, which was completed in *Annex 2*.

6.6.1. The variables and measurement scales used in the model

Based on the analysis of the literature, the development of the scale took place in parallel with the examination of the definitions and variables, the research models and the related measurement scales. Thus, the operationalization of the studied variables and the formulation of hypotheses comprised the first step in the development of the scale. The variables and their operationalization are summarized below.

Activity

Activity is an independent latent variable of the internal model of the measurement model, which appears in Hypothesis H1.

According to Chang et al (2013), consumer activity is communication on online platforms in which the consumer is willing to obtain and share information from/with others. According to Lei–Law (2015), consumer-generated content has an impact on other consumers in the hospitality industry and thus also has an impact on demand (BEUSCART et al. 2016). In online platforms, we distinguish between different activities, such as opinion-seeking (passive - lurkers) and opinion-forming (active - posters) activities (HEINONEN 2011, LÓPEZ–SICILIA 2014, MARKOS-KUJBUS 2017). Because the intensity of consumer activity varies, I also use a moderating variable in the measurement model that focuses on the level of consumer activity.

During the analysis of the literature and the analysis of the research models in terms of my scale development Ku et al. (2013) study stands out, who consider the theory of use and satisfaction to be the first approach to consumer activity that examines how the consumer uses the applied platform to satisfy consumer needs and recognizes the passive or active role of the consumer. Sheldon–Bryant's (2016) research shows a positive relationship between social activity and Instagram use by employing a scale of use and satisfaction (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$). In terms of scale development, the other outstanding model is the three-step factor model of consumer value creation in Yi–Gong (2013), from which I take the statements of the information seaking (CR[15] = 0.91, AVE[16] = 0.78) and -sharing (CR = 0.94, AVE = 0.79) scale from the consumer participation behavior. Thus, activity as a latent independent variable was measured with the statements shown in *Table 11*.

[15] composite reliability, hereinafter CR
[16] average variance extracted, hereinafter AVE

Statements	Variables	Source
I like the pictures of those who follow me on Instagram	ACT_1	Based on Sheldon–Bryant 2016 and Debreceni 2017
I share my experiences on Instagram	ACT_2	Based on Yi–Gong 2013, Sheldon–Bryant 2016 and Debreceni 2017
I regularly search for information on Instagram	ACT_3	Based on Yi–Gong 2013
I keep in touch with my friends on Instagram.	ACT_4	Based on Yi–Gong 2013, Sheldon–Bryant 2016 and Debreceni 2017

Table 11: Activity variable scale statements

Source: Elaborated by the author

Influencer

Influencer is an independent latent variable of the internal model of the measurement model that appears in Hypothesis H2.

Gretzel (2018) defines the concept of influencer as individuals who, based on their authority and relationships, influence consumer decisions in social media. Influencers can be average consumers (KELLER–FAY 2016, KOVÁCS et al. 2019), celebrities, various industry players, experts who present their daily activities on different social media platforms, offering their products and services to their followers, thus building their own awareness (HEARN–SCHOENHOFF 2016, GRETZEL 2018). This opportunity has also been recognized by marketers and they work with influencers as part of influencer marketing given the fact that influencer opinions have become almost as important to consumers as opinions of family and friends (SWANT 2016). The latter statement is also important because my research is based on a planned model of behavior, one element of which is the subjective norm, which is the opinion of family and friends. Because I measure the influencing power of influencer in my research, the subjective norm is denoted by the influencer.

In terms of literature analysis and analysis of research models, the study of Wang (2011), who examined the effect of gastronomic blogs on the tasting of food and beverages in the destination, stands out in terms of my scale development (CR = 0.87, AVE = 0.68). Other relevant research I applied during the scale development was the study by Soliman (2018), whose research was also based on a model of planned behavior that examines the intention of travelers to revisit a destination. In his study, he analyzes the relationship between e-WOM and the subjective norm (Cronbach's α = 0.94, CR = 0.96, AVE = 0.82), among which the relationship is significant. Thus, the influencer as a latent independent variable was measured with the statements shown in *Table 12*.

Statements	Variables	Source
I choose a restaurant based on the recommendation of the influencers.	INFLU_1	Based on Wang 2011
On the recommendation of the influencers, I visit gastronomic places (settlements).	INFLU_2	Based on Wang 2011
Based on the recommendations of the influencers, I taste local, typical dishes.	INFLU_3	Based on Wang 2011
I regularly gather information from influencers before I go to a restaurant	INFLU_4	Based on Soliman 2018

Table 12: Influencer variable scale statements

Source: Elaborated by the author

Attitude

Attitude is an independent latent variable of the internal model of the measurement model, which appears in Hypothesis H3.

According to Soliman (2018), attitude refers to the feelings and behavioral behaviors of individuals in the model. Attitude suggests that a person experiences a kind of favorable or unfavorable attitude towards a behavior, so the more favorable an action is for the individual, the greater his or her intention to act (CHUNG 2016, S. GUBIK et al. 2018).

In terms of scale development, I based on Ting et al. (2019) who in their research, among other aspects, examine the relationship between attitudes. In their literature review they also consider consumer attitudes as the most determinant of consumer behavioral intentions (CR = 0.96, AVE = 0.88). In his study, Soliman (2018) also highlights the role of attitude, believing that attitude is an important factor that predicts and influences the behavioral intentions of tourists/consumers (Cronbach's α = 0.85, CR = 0.89, AVE = 0.62). From the point of view of my research, attitude examines the attitude of the consumer towards consumption in a restaurant. Thus, attitude as a latent independent variable was measured with the statements shown in *Table 13.*

Statemments	Variable	Source
Eating in a restaurant is a useless/useful activity for me (e.g. learning a new taste, learning a new cooking technology).	ATT_1	Based on Ting et al 2019 and Jang et al. 2015
Eating out at a restaurant is a boring/fun activity for me	ATT_2	Based on Soliman 2018
Eating in a restaurant is not a satisfy/satisefy activity for me	ATT_3	Based on Soliman 2018

Table 13: Attitude variable scale statements

Source: Elaborated by the author

Perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control is an independent latent variable of the internal model of the measurement model, which appears in Hypothesis H4.

Perceived behavioral control means whether an individual is able to control certain factors that facilitate or limit the performance of his or her intended behavior in a given situation (AJZEN 1991, CHUNG 2016). As such, a factor may be, for example, the consumer's financial situation. According to Soliman (2018), perceived behavioral control is nothing more than the consumer's belief in the existence of his or her own resources required to perform the action (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$, CR = 0.93, AVE = 0.73).

The formulation of perceived behavioral control statements was a major challenge for me during the scale development, so I had to examine several research statements. Grounded on Wang (2011) (CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.74), Jang et al. (2015) (CR = 0.94, AVE = 0.83), Soliman (2018) and Juschten et al. (2019) (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$, CR = 0.86, AVE = 0.47), I was able to transfer the statements to my research with some modifications. Thus, the perceived behavioral control as a latent independent variable was measured with the statements shown in *Table 14*.

Statements	Variable	Source
I am confident that I will be able to revisit the restaurants suggested by influencers again in the near future	PBC_1	Based on Jang et al. 2015 and Soliman 2018
I have enough money to try the restaurants recommended by the influencers	PBC_2	Based on Jang et al. 2015
I have enough time to try the restaurants recommended by the influencers	PBC_3	Based on Jang et al. 2015
My opinion of the restaurant is influenced by the experience of influencers in relation to the restaurant	PBC_4	Based on Wang 2011

Table 14: Perceived behavioral control variable scale statements

Source: Elaborated by the author

Consumption intent and real consumption/travel

The consumer intention is independent even of the real consumption/travel dependent latent variable of the internal model of the measurement model, which variables appear in Hypothesis H5a.

According to Chung (2016), consumer behavioral intent determines and predicts the future behavior of a consumer. Thus, the consumer's positive or negative behavioral intention influences his or her real action (CHUNG 2016, SALZBERG et al. 2019). Levitt et al. (2017) in their research focuses on travel intent, and they believe that those who feel stronger motivation to consume are also more likely to consume. As a result of their research, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between gastronomic motivation and travel intentions. Tommasetti et al. (2018) examined the factors influencing consumer decision. Their assumption has also gained certainty that intent precedes action directly, so they are closely related.

In this part of the scale development, several studies were reviewed and I based my research on Shrivastava et al. (2021) (Consumer intent Cronbach's α = 0.87, Real consumption, travel Cronbach's α = 0.87), Jiménez-Castillo–Sánchez-Fernández (2019) (Cronbach's α = 0.92, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.81) and Jang et al. (2015) (CR = 0.93, AVE = 0.82). These studies used terms such as 'my intentions', 'I plan', 'I will measure'. These terms are also important for my research because even in English the chronology is nicely separated in the grammatical part, while in Hungarian the chronology of action is not so clear. For this reason, it was important to include a time-determining in my claims, so I used the term the near future in case of consumer intention (SHRIVASTAVA et al. 2021, JIMÉNEZ-CASTILLO–SÁNCHEZ-FERNÁNDEZ 2019). The importance of using the term was also highlighted by experts from the panel. Because I did not find any claims specifically related to influencer and restaurant intentions based on my desk research, I examined the impact of the community and their claims about e-WOM and restaurant consumer intentions and included them in my research statements. Thus, consumer intent and real consumption/travel as latent dependent variables were measured with the statements shown in *Table 15*.

Statements	**Variable**	**Source**
I plan to travel to a restaurant recommended by influencer in the near future	CI_1	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021, Jang et al. 2015 and Wang 2011
I intend to consume it in a restaurant recommended by influencer in the near future	CI_2	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021 and Jang et al. 2015
In the near future, I intend to choose a restaurant based on the suggestion of the influencer I am following	CI_3	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021 and Jiménez-Castillo–Sánchez-Fernández 2019
I will be eating at the restaurant that the influencer I followed advised	RCT_1	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021 and Jiménez-Castillo–Sánchez-Fernández 2019
Typically, I choose a restaurant based on the suggestion of influencers	RCT_2	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021 and Jiménez-Castillo–Sánchez-Fernández 2019
I will continue to visit the restaurant recommended by the influencer in the future	RCT_3	Based on Shrivastava et al. 2021 and Jiménez-Castillo–Sánchez-Fernández 2019

Table 15: Consumption intent and real consumption/travel scale variables
Source: Elaborated by the author

Destination

Destination is a moderating variable between consumption intent and real consumption and travel, which appears in Hypothesis H5b.

The performance of the destination also stands out in the definition of gastronomic tourism (section 2.1), as the tourists become aware of the food and drinks of a given destination during their trips (HALL et al. 2003, KIVELA–CROTTS 2006, GORDIN–TRABSKAYA 2013). According to Baah et al (2020), gastronomic tourism has become a practical area of interest for evolving destinations. Based on Ellish et al. (2018), gastronomy is the "cultural artefact" of the destination, so gastronomy means image and position of the destination (SZAKÁLY 2022).

In terms of scale development, I did not find a secondary source in the development of destination claims that could be applicable. Thus, during the elaboration of the statements, the dissertation draft was defended and compiled on the basis of the guidance of my supervisor and finalized on the basis of the expert analysis. Thus, destination as a moderating variable was measured with the statements shown in *Table 16*.

Statements	**Variable**	**Source**
I am not interested in the offer of restaurants and other attractions that can only be found on the spot	DEST_1	Own development based on the recommendations of the expert panel
I am interested in the location/ settlements and other attractions, and if I go there, I will check the offer of the restaurants in the spot	DEST_2	
It is typical for me to travel to try a restaurant	DEST_3	
The local gastronomic specialties encourage me to revisit the place/settlement. (I will revisit the places where I ate well)	DEST_4	

Table 16: Destination scale variables

Source: Elaborated by the author

Covid-19

Covid-19 is a moderating variable between intent to consume and real consumption and travel, which appears in Hypothesis H5c.

Riestyaningrum et al. (2020) and Akter et al (2021) suggest that a pandemic has an effect on changes in consumer behavior versus consumption and travel intentions. In terms of scale development, I did not find a secondary source in the development of the coronavirus statement that I could have used. Thus, it was finalized based on expert analysis. So, in the research, I measured the Covid-19 moderating variable with the following statement *"I think I intend to consume less/more in a restaurant after the Covid-19 epidemic"* using a 5-point Likert scale.

6.7. Method of statistical data analysis – model of structured equations

In the analysis of my questionnaire, I intend to apply the model of structured equations (hereinafter SEM). The application of the method is justified by what is summarized in *Table 17*, in which we can see the relationship between the variables.

Hypotheses	Variables	Type of variable	Method of testing a hypothesis
H1: Consumer activity on Instagram is positively related to gastronomic intent.	Activity – Consumption intent	independent – dependent	SEM
H2: The gastronomic influencer has a positive effect on gastronomic consumption intent.	Influencer – Consumption intent	independent – dependent	SEM
H3: The consumer's consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent.	Attitude – Consumption intent	independent – dependent	SEM
H4: The perceived behavioral control of the consumer towards consumption in the restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent	Perceived behavioral control – Consumption intent	independent – dependent	SEM
H5a: Gastronomic consumption intent has a positive effect on real gastronomic consumption and travel.	Consumption intent – Real consumption and travel	independent – dependent	SEM
H5b: The role of destination has a positive effect on the relationship between gastronomic consumption intent and real consumption and travel.	Consumption intent – Real consumption and travel – Destination	independent – dependent – moderator	SEM
H5c: The Covid-19 epidemic negatively affects consumers' real gastronomic consumption and travel	Consumption intent – Real consumption and travel – Covid-19	independent – dependent – moderator	SEM

Table 17. táblázat: Hypothesis system and variables

Source: Elaborated by the author

The formulated hypotheses are tested using the SEM modeling method. SEM modeling differs from mathematical and statistical methods in that it can be used in the case of a model based on some theoretical relationship and construction, during which it allows the exploration of the relationships observed in the data. The method is suitable for testing several regression calculations in parallel, so it can be considered as an extension of linear models, which can be used to model a more complex relationship between variables (SIMON 2016). The SEM modeling consists of a measurement (external) and structural (internal) model, and the relationships are represented in a path diagram (*Figure 15).* The measurement model is intended to produce a relationship between the observed variables and the latent variables that does not examine causality, while the structural model aims to examine causality in the case of latent variables obtained from the measurement model (SIMON 2016). The background of the SEM application is the latent variables, which we cannot measure directly, so we use manifest variables for the measurement (KAZÁR 2014). The measurement model includes correlations between latent and manifest variables (SIMON 2016).

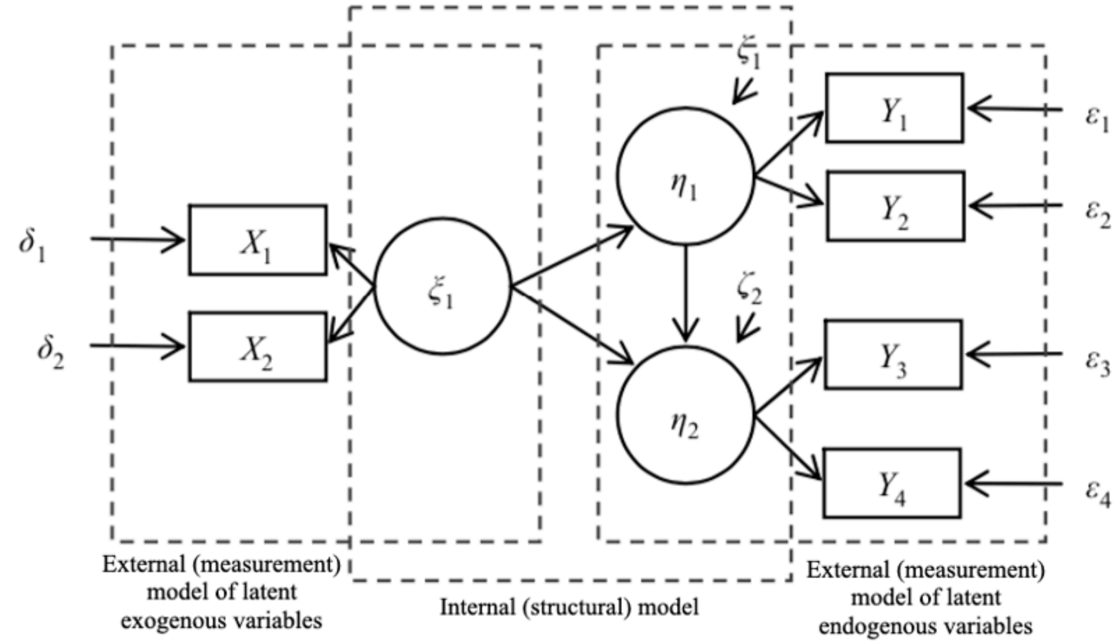

Figure 15: Schematic diagram of the SEM model
Source: Kazár 2014:35

Annex 3 presents the indicators and latent variables designated on the basis of *Figure 15* for clarity in the interpretation of the results of the dissertation research. In my research, the internal model was first defined, in which the latent variables (elements ξ and η in *Annex 3*), the construct, were identified. Following the literature analysis, I assigned manifest variables, also known as indicators (elements X and Y in *Annex 3*), to these latent variables, which I clarified and finalized after expert opinions.

Among the latent variables, we distinguish between independent exogenous (ξ) and dependent endogenous (η) variables, where exogenous variables can only be explanatory variables, while endogenous variables can also have target and explanatory roles (KAZÁR 2014). After defining the indicators, I can determine the direction of the relationship between the manifest and the latent variables, which can be of the reflective or formative type. We can use two models to solve the correlations:

- covariance modeling (CB-SEM): common variance is analyzed,
- variance-based modeling - partial least squares structured model (PLS-SEM): all three types of variance (common variance, individual/specific variance, error term) are analyzed (SIMON 2016, KAZÁR 2014).

Due to the causal and predictive nature of my research, I used the PLS-SEM method. Unlike covariance-based SEM, variance-based SEM is able to estimate common factors and composites that make it suitable for behavioral constructs as well as design constructs (HENSELER 2017).

6.7.1. Introduction to PLS-SEM modeling

Henseler et al. (2016) describes a new approach to PLS route modeling (PLS-PM) that updates guidelines for using PLS-PM and reporting and interpreting results. PLS-PM can be interpreted as a full-featured SEM method that can handle both factor models and complex models to measure construction, estimate recursive and non-recursive structural models, and test model fit. The traditional and modern view of Henseler et al. (2016) compared and summarized the result, as displayed in *Table 18*.

Traditional view on PLS	Modern view on PLS
PLS has some but not all abilities of structural equation modeling	PLS is a full-fledged structural equation modeling approach
PLS can estimate formative (using Mode B) and reflective measurement models (using Mode A)	PLS can consistently estimate composite models (using Mode B) and factor models (using consistent PLS for the latter)
Identification is not an issue for PLS	To ensure identification, analysts must provide a nomological net for each multi-item construct
PLS path models must be recursive	PLS path models can contain feedback loops or take into account endogeneity if an adequate estimator is used for the structural model. A sufficient number of exogenous variables must be available
PLS needs fewer observations than other SEM techniques	PLS does not need fewer observations than other techniques when it comes to inference statistics. Analysts should ensure sufficient statistical power and representativeness of data
In contrast to other SEM techniques, PLS does not rely on the assumption of normality	With regard to assumptions made for the estimation of parameters, PLS does not differ from other SEM techniques. For inference statistics, PLS applies a non-parametric technique, namely, bootstrapping, which can equally be applied by other SEM techniques
PLS only permits local model assessment by means of certain criteria	PLS path models can and should be assessed globally by means of tests of model fit and approximate measures of model fit. Additionally, models should be locally assessed
The reliability of PLS construct scores is indicated by Cronbach's α and/or composite reliability	The reliability coefficient ρ_A is a consistent estimate of the reliability of PLS construct scores; composite reliability (based on consistent loadings) is a consistent estimate of the reliability of sum scores
Discriminant validity should be assessed by comparing each construct's average variance extracted with its squared construct correlations	Discriminant validity should be assessed by means of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) and by comparing each construct's average variance extracted (based on consistent loadings) with its squared consistent construct correlations
Bootstrapping should be conducted in combination with sign change correction in order to avoid inflated standard errors	For each construct, a dominant indicator should be defined in order to avoid sign indeterminacy

Table 18.: Henseler–Hubona–Ray summary table of traditional and modern views for PLS

Source: Hensler et al. (2016:14)

Note:

Mode A: The arrows point from the construction to its indicators

Mode B: The arrows point from the indicators to their construction

Later, Benitez et al. (2020) refined Henseler et al. (2016) elements of modern views:

- "*PLS-PM can be used for various types of research, e.g., confirmatory and explanatory or predictive research.*
- *PLS-PM can produce estimates even for very small sample sizes.*
- *PLS-PM can also consistently estimate non-recursive structural models*

- *First, PLS-PM always estimates an underlying composite model, regardless of whether the model consists of latent variables.*
- *Therefore, to consistently estimate models containing latent variables, one must correct for attenuation of the construct scores correlations. In the context of PLS-PM, this procedure is known as PLSc .*
- *Causal–formative measurement models can be estimated by means of a MIMIC model.*
- *The overall model can be assessed in two non-exclusive ways: (1) bootstrap-based tests for overall model fit, and (2) measures of overall model fit.*
- *Currently, Dijkstra–Henseler's ρA is the only consistent reliability coefficient for PLS-PM construct scores.*
- *The HTMT should be considered to assess discriminant validity"* (BENITEZ et al. 2020:2).

It was important for my research to define the measurement model, which was also based on the work of Jörg Henseler. According to Henseler (2017), three types of measurement models can be distinguished: composite, reflective, and causal-formative. The choice of measurement model depends on the nature of the design, whether we are examining a design or behavioral constract. The difference among the measurement models is illustrated in a 2017 paper by Henseler (*Table 19*).

Factor	Composite Measurement	Reflective Measurement	Causal–Formative Measurement
Relationship between construct and indicators	The indicators make up the construct.	The construct causes its indicators.	The indicators cause the construct.
Expected correlational pattern among indicators	High correlations are common but not required.	High correlations are expected.	There is no reason to expect the measures are correlated.
Validity of scale score	The scale score adequately represents the construct.	The scale score does not adequately represent the construct.	The scale score does not adequately represent the construct.
Dealing with measurement error	Does not involve measurement error.	Takes measurement error into account at the item level.	Takes measurement error into account at the construct level.
Consequences of dropping an indicator	Dropping an indicator alters the composite and may change its meaning.	Dropping an indicator does not alter the meaning of the construct.	Dropping an indicator increases the measurement error on the construct level.
Nomological net	Indicators are required to have the same consequences.	Indicators are required to have the same antecedents and consequences.	Indicators are not required to have the same antecedents and consequences.

Table 19: Henseler's summary table of the differences between the types of measurement models
Source: Henseler 2017:180

The complex measurement model assumes a definitive relationship between the construct and its indicators. The reflective measurement model focuses on research on consumer behavior, yet the causal-formative measurement model assumes a different epistemic relationship between the construct and its indicators. Thus, I selected the measurement model of my research based on the decision tree model by Henseler (2017). Starting from the nature of the construction, the latent variables indicate a behavioral construction, and the epistemic relationship of the indicators is consequential, so it is advisable to use the reflective measurement method. Furthermore, in addition to the study by Henseler (2017), Nagy et al. (2015) and Kazár (2014), I need to apply the reflective measurement method in my model, because latent variables can be related to attitudes (behavioral component). In evaluating the reflective external model, reliability and validity were measured using different criteria, as illustrated in *Table 20*. "*λ is standardized factor weights for the manifest variable and $Var(\varepsilon) = 1 - \lambda^2$. The Cronbach α-index mostly underestimates reliability because it assumes the same weights. For this reason, it is more appropriate to consider the value of CR, which eliminates this problem*" (T. NAGY–BERNSCHÜTZ 2017:35).

Subject of investigation	Index	Criterion	Source
Indicator reliability	Cronbach α	$\alpha > 0,7$	*Cronbach* 1951
Construct reliability	Composition reliability index: $CR = \frac{(\sum_i \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_i \lambda_i)^2 + \sum_i Var(\varepsilon_i)}$	$CR > 0,7$	*Werts–Linn–Jöreskog* [1974]
Convergence validity	Average variance extracted index: $AVE = \frac{\sum_i \lambda_i^2}{\sum_i \lambda_i^2 + \sum_i Var(\varepsilon_i)}$	$AVE > 0,5$	*Fornell–Larcker* [1981]
Discrimination validity	Fornell-Larcker criterion: The square root of the AVE values for each latent variable must be greater than the correlation coefficient between that latent variable and all other latent variables.		*Fornell–Larcker* [1981]
	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of latent variable pair correlations.	$HTMT < 0,9$	*Henseler–Ringle– Sarstedt* [2015]
	The HTMT ratio is the quotient of the average of the pairwise correlation coefficients between the two latent variables and the average of the pairwise correlation coefficients between the manifest variables associated with the same latent variables.		

Table 20: Criteria for fitting the reflective external model

Source: Elaborated by author based on T. Nagy–Bernschütz 2017:35

In addition to latent variables and indicators, the following can be used in the model during SEM modeling:

- control variable: these are socio-demographic factors that may be important variables in the context of a given model in explaining differences in attitudes across different contexts, such as gender, age, education (BAAH et al. 2020);
- mediating variable: suggests a third variable that can facilitate the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable, (MANLEY et al. 2021, NITZL et al. 2016);
- moderating variable: a third variable (MOD) directly affects the strength between the two constructs, or even the direction of the relationship between the two other variables (MANLEY et al. 2021, BECKER et al. 2018).

The presentation of the variables and the methodology of my research are followed by the presentation of the results of my research.

7. THE RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

The questionnaire was collected in two stages:

- Shared by the influencers: between 26.04.2021 and 29.05.2021, during which 335 questionnaires were completed.
- Shared by the restaurants: between 06.07.2021 and 31.07.2021, during which 133 questionnaires were completed.

Incomplete questionnaires were withdrawn during the data clean-up. After this process, the final number of questionnaires in the database generated through the influencers Instagram interface was 329. The number of questionnaires generated through the restaurant's Facebook group was 131. However, respondents that gave a negative answer to the filter question - Do you use Instagram? - were also deducted from this number. Thus, 92 questionnaires shared by the restaurant remained in the database. Eventually, the total number of items in the analysis is 421. I created the questionnaire using an online questionnaire program called Qualtrics.

7.1. Demographic data analysis

Demographic data was analyzed using SPSS 27 software. Regarding the demographic distributions (*Table 21*), 70.1% of the respondents are women, 45.8% belong to the age group 26-35, and 57.2% live in the capital, Budapest. 82.4% of influencers' followers have a higher education and 60.6% is an employee. 39.2% of the respondents live in a relationship and 37.1% are married. The net income of 43.2% of the respondents is between HUF 250,001 and HUF 400,000. According to the Statista May 2020 analysis, Instagram has 2.19 million users in Hungary, used by 32% of 18-24 year olds and 31% of 25-34 year olds. According to the Crane Statistical Agency in Hungary 2019 analysis, 59.3% of the respondents (n=6194) belong to the under-25 age group, another 23.8% are 25-34 years and 11.85% belong to the 35-44 age group. Based on these, it can be said that the base of followers of gastronomic influencers is mainly 26-45 year olds, 51.6% of whom live in Budapest. This data is consistent with other research showing that gastronomic tourists have a higher level of education than other types of tourists (KIVELA–CROTTS, 2006).

N= 421					
Gender			**Material status****		
female	295	70,1%	single	88	20,9%
male	126	29,9%	living in a relationship	165	39,2%
Age group			married	156	37,1%
16-25	46	10,9%	divorced	12	2,9%
26-35	193	45,8%	**Labor market status*****		
36-45	136	32,3%	employee	255	60,6%
46-55	39	9,3%	contractor	101	24,0%
above 56	7	1,7%	casual worker	8	1,9%
Educational attainment*			unemployed	8	1,9%
primary school	1	0,2%	household	11	2,6%
high school	51	12,1%	student	11	2,6%
skilled labour	22	5,2%	student and part-time	11	2,6%
college degree	168	39,9%	student and full-time	16	3,8%
University degree	166	39,4%	**Income level (net value per capital)**		
doctoral degree	13	3,1%	under 100.000 HUF	5	1,2%
Residence			between 100.001 - 250.000 HUF	73	17,3%
Capital – Budapest	241	57,2%	between 250.001 – 400.000	182	43,2%
county seat	72	17,1%	between 400.001 – 650.000	84	20,0%
other city	51	12,1%	over 650.001 HUF	67	15,9%
village	27	6,4%	student, supported by parent/ guardian	10	2,4%
abroad	30	7,1%			

Table 21: Demographic analysis

Source: Elaborated by the author

*Note: The answer was included as an option, but not marked by the respondents: * less than 8 classes; **widow; *** retired*

7.2. Analysis of structural equations model

I used SmartPLS 3.0 software to perform the PLS-SEM analysis. I describe the analysis in two parts. In the first subsection, during the analysis of the measurement model, I examine the fit of the model, the reliability of the constructs and indicators, the similarity, the discriminant and the validity of the content. Next, in the second subchapter, during the evaluation of the structural model, I examine the fit of the overall model, the coefficient of determination of the constructs, the path coefficients and their relevance, and the strength of the effect. This section describes the effect of mediating variables.

7.2.1. Evaluation of measurement model

Prior to the road analysis, different indicators are examined during the evaluation of the measurement model. The first such indicator is the **standardized residual mean square residual (**hereinafter **SRMR)**, which examines the fit of the model. This value must be less than 0.08. The SRMR value for the measurement model of my research is 0.070. However, further reliability and validity indicators need to be examined, as the SRMR value is the most informative for model diagnostics to detect significant differences between the empirical covariance matrix and the hypothesized model covariance matrix (HENSELER 2017).

Cronbach α is one of the methods for measuring the reliability of internal consistency with a threshold value of 0.7. The other method is the **Jöreskog composite reliability rho (**hereinafter **CR)** index, which also has a threshold of 0.7. Even the Cronbach's α is considered to be a conservative approach and the CR indicator is considered too liberal, so recent research suggests **Dijskstra–Henseler's rho_A** indicator as an alternative for examining the reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient rho_A is usually located between the conservative Cronbach's alpha and the liberal CR value, and can therefore be considered and accepted as a compromise between these two measures. The value of the rho_A coefficient should be greater than 0.7 (HAIR et al. 2021, HENSELER 2021).

The reliability indicators are followed by an examination of the validity indicators, which means the examination of convergent validity (hereinafter AVE), discriminant validity and content validity. **Similarity (convergent) validity** is the degree to which a construct converges in order to explain the variance of its indicators. The measure used to evaluate the convergent validity of a construct is the average variance extracted (AVE) for all indicators for each construct. AVE must be greater than 0.5. Thus, AVE shows that construct explains at least 50% of the standard deviation of the indicators that make up the construct (HAIR et al. 2021). *Table 22* shows the AVE values of the constructs based on which the model fits the criterion of similarity validity.

Construction/latent variable	Indicators	Factor loadings	Cronbach's α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Activity			0,764	0,803	0,840	0,568
	ACT_1	0,796				
	ACT_2	0,718				
	ACT_3	0,798				
	ACT_4	0,698				
Attitude			0,938	0,952	0,960	0,889
	ATT_1	0,929				
	ATT_2	0,953				
	ATT_3	0,947				
Influencer			0,930	0,930	0,950	0,827
	INFLU_1	0,936				
	INFLU_2	0,914				
	INFLU_3	0,903				
	INFLU_4	0,885				
Percive behavior controll			0,715	0,810	0,808	0,521
	PBC_1	0,880				
	PBC_2	0,584				
	PBC_3	0,586				
	PBC_4	0,791				
Consumption intent			0,951	0,952	0,968	0,911
	CI_1	0,943				
	CI_2	0,964				
	CI_3	0,956				
Real consumption/travel before Covid-19			0,951	0,954	0,968	0,911
	RCT_1	0,952				
	RCT_2	0,951				
	RCT_3	0,961				
Destination			0,728	0,735	0,880	0,785
	DEST_3	0,901				
	DEST_4	0,872				
Covid-19			1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	COV-19	1,000				

Table 22: Summary table of the reliability and validity indices of the measurement model

Source: Elaborated by the author

Discriminant or difference validity examines how empirically a construct differs from other constructs in a structural model (HAIR et al. 2021), which we examine in two ways. The first case is the traditional view, when we apply the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which is valid when two conceptually different constructs are also statistically different. The **Fornell–Larcker** criterion assumes that the AVE of a construct must be higher than the quadratic correlation of all (HENSELER 2021). The numbers highlighted in *Table 23*, i.e., the value of the square root of the diagonal of the AVE and the correlation values below the diagonal, should be lower. However, based on recent research (Hair et al. 2021, HENSELER 2021), the metrics of the Fornell–Larcker criterion are not considered suitable for examining discriminant validity, however, I present the criterion in my dissertation as it is still accepted in the literature. The new criterion for the validity of discrimination is **HTMT** (heterotrait-monotrait ratio). HTMT is the mean value of indicator correlations between constructs relative to the mean of the average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct (HAIR et al. 2021). According to Henseler (2017), an HTMT value significantly less than 1 or clearly below 0.85 provides sufficient evidence for the discriminant validity of a pair of constructs. If the constructs are conceptually more segregated, a lower, more conservative threshold, such as 0.85, is suggested (HAIR et al. 2021). *Table 24* shows the HTMT values, from which it can be said that the single value of the observed behavioral control and the influencer construct pair is 0.904, which, although higher than the recommended value of 0.9, cannot be considered a significant difference.

	Activity	Attitude	Consumption intent	Influencer	Real consumption/travel	PRC	Destination	Covid-19
Activity	**0,754**							
Attitude	0,019	**0,943**						
Consumption intent	0,435	0,105	**0,954**					
Influencer	0,508	0,078	0,822	**0,909**				
Real consumption/travel	0,431	0,073	0,851	0,822	**0,954**			
PRC	0,496	0,148	0,768	0,830	0,778	**0,722**		
Destination	0,350	0,111	0,360	0,323	0,370	0,386	**0,886**	
Covid-19	0,048	0,303	0,178	0,131	0,149	0,150	0,173	**1,000**

Table 23: Fornell–Larcker analysis

Source: Elaborated by the author

	Activity	Attitude	Consumption intent	Influencer	Real consumption/travel	PRC	Destination	Covid-19
Activity								
Attitude	0,067							
Consumption intent	0,457	0,109						
Influencer	0,549	0,082	0,873					
Real consumption/travel	0,530	0,096	0,897	0,880				
PRC	0,602	0,187	0,833	0,904	0,884			
Destination	0,468	0,137	0,433	0,391	0,443	0,556		
Covid-19	0,066	0,313	0,183	0,136	0,153	0,188	0,201	

Table 24: HTMT analysis

Source: Elaborated by the author

The next step is to test the reliability of the indicators. In this case, we examine how much of the variance of each indicator explains their construction, which indicates the reliability of the indicator. Hair et al. (2021), loads above 0.708 are suggested because they mean that the construct explains more than 50% of the standard deviation of the indicator. However, there are cases where this value is less than the specified value. In this case, we do not automatically eliminate the indicator, but also examine other reliability and validity indicators. The indicator is excluded from 0.4 to 0.708 only if it leads to an increase in the reliability of internal consistency or convergence validity. However, an indicator with a value less than 0.4 should be removed from the measurement model (HAIR et al. 2021). In the measurement model (*Table 22*), the value of 3 indicators (ACT_4, PBC_2, PBC_3) is less than the allowable threshold. However, the deletion of these indicators did not significantly contribute to the increase of other reliability and validity indicators or to the improvement of the value of the model fit, so the indicators were retained. Furthermore, I used tried-and-tested scales for activity and perceived behavioral control scales that are widely accepted in the literature. For destination, on the other hand, I deleted 2 indicators (DEST_1 loading 0.588; DEST_2 loading 0.533) because they contributed to increasing reliability and validity indices and increasing the value of model fit. In terms of **content validity**, it must be demonstrated that the statements used to measure the latent variable adequately represent the latent variable (NAGY 2016). Since I measure the latent variables with the scales revealed in the literature (Chapter 3.6), we can consider this criterion fulfilled. Overall, based on *Tables 22, 23* and *24*, it can be said that the expected limit values have been met, so the internal consistency of the model can be considered adequate, so the measurement model is in good fit.

7.2.2. Evaluation of a structural model

Once it is assured that the measurement model is reliable and valid, the next step is to analyze the structural model and evaluate its results. The structural model is examined based on the evaluation of collinearity, the significance of the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the path coefficient.

In connection with the structural model, I also examined the fit of the model, during which I obtained 0.076 for the **SRMR** value. This value is below the threshold that the internal model fit well. In the study of the coefficient of determination of endogenous constructs, we evaluate the extent of the explained variance of each construct and the explanatory power of the model. $\mathbf{R^2}$ is used to evaluate the goodness of fit in the regression analysis. The R^2 value gives the proportion of variance explained in the dependent construct, thus providing insight into the predictive power of the model within the sample (HAIR et al. 2021, BENITEZ et al. 2020) The R^2 value for consumption intent is 0.700, which indicates that 70.0% of the the variance in consumption intention can be explained by the correlation with the other constructions in the model, even this is 74% in the case of real consumption/travel. So, the validity of both constructs is supported. Both values are above 70%, which is considered a **moderate explanatory power** (HAIR et al. 2021). This attributes a proper fit to the model and implies the functionality of the model. Considering the R^2 value of previous research, which is 0.516 (JANG et al. 2015) and 0.68 (JIMÉNEZ-CASTILLO–SÁNCHEZ-FERNÁNDEZ 2019) for consumption intent, the values obtained appear to be excellent.

The next step is to assess the significance of the path coefficients and the relevance of the path coefficients. This method expresses the strength of the dependencies between the constructs. The path coefficient quantifies the direct effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable. The size of the path coefficient is valuable information for causal and exploratory research. In addition to the size of the coefficient, the sign also matters because a negative sign means that an increase in the independent variable is associated with a decrease in the dependent variable (HENSELER 2021). It can be seen in *Table 25* that, for example, increasing the attitude by one standard deviation will increase the intention to consume by 0.018 standard deviation if all other variables are kept constant. By evaluating the path coefficient, we get an answer regarding the support of the hypotheses, which is explained in more detail in Chapter 8.1. The evaluation of the significance level is also based on the standard error of the bootstrapping method as well as the calculation of the t-value of the path coefficient or the confidence intervals. The path coefficient is significant at the 5% level if the zero value does not fall within the 95% confidence interval (HAIR et al. 2021).

In addition to the path coefficients, an important indicator is $\mathbf{f^2}$, which shows the strength of the effect between the constructions. Regarding the strength of the f^2value, a distinction is made between negligible (below 0.020), weak (between 0.020 and 0.150), medium (between 0.150 and 0.350) and strong (above 0.350) effects (HENSELER 2021, BENITEZ et al 2020). When examining strength, it is unrealistic to expect all constructs to show a strong effect (BENITEZ et al. 2020). In the research, the strength of the effect of activity and attitude on consumption intent is negligible (f^2=0.000 and f^2=0.001), the strength of the effect of destination and Covid-19 on real consumption and travel is also negligible (f^2=0.017 and f^2=0.001), the strength of the percive behavioral control is weak (f^2=0.073) while the effect of the influencer is strong (f^2=0.354). The strength of consumption intent for real consumption and travel is strong (f^2=2.291).

				Bootstrap confidence interval percentilisei	
Relationship	**Path coefficient (β)**	**P value – Significance**	**t-value**	**5%**	**95%**
Direct connection					
Activity –» Consumption intent	-0,003	0,447	0,132	-0,043	0,041
Attitude –» Consumption intent	0,018	0,272	0,607	-0,027	0,069
Influencer –» Consumption intent	0,598	0,000	10,460	0,498	0,684
PBC –» Consumption intent	0,271	0,000	5,007	0,190	0,363
Consumption intent –» Real consumption/travel	0,834	0,000	40,693	0,797	0,867
Covid-19 –» Real consumption/travel	-0,012	0,314	0,486	-0,053	0,027
Destination –» Real consumption/travel	0,072	0,005	2,604	0,030	0,120
Endogenous variable	**R^2**	**Q^2**			
Consumption intent	0,700	0,633			
Real consumption/travel	0,740	0,668			
Real consumption/travel after moderation	0,750	0,676			
Strength of the effect	**f^2**				
Activity –» Consumption intent	0,000				
Attitude –» Consumption intent	0,001				
Influencer –» Consumption intent	0,354				
PBC –» Consumption intent	0,073				
Consumption intent –» Real consumption/travel	2,291				
Covid-19 –» Real consumption/travel	0,001				
Destination –» Real consumption/travel	0,017				

Table 25: Table of summarizing structural model metrics

Source: Elaborated by the author

7.2.3. Evaluation of destination and Covid-19 as moderating variables

In my research, I used destination and Covid-19 as moderating constructs. Using these constructs, I tested whether the variables change the strength or direction of the relationship between consumption intent and real consumption and travel constructs. Moderators can be single-element or multi-element constructs (HAIR et al. 2021). The most important difference is related to the moderator's measurement scale, during which we distinguish:

- categorical (typically dichotomous) moderators – pseudo-coded, where we usually use two reference categories;
- continuous moderators – influence the strength of the specific relationship between the two latent variables (HAIR et al. 2021).

I used both constructs as continuous moderators. To analyze the interaction effect, Hair et al. (2021) and Henseler (2021) both recommend a two-step approach, as the roots of the approach lie in the explicit exploitation of the benefits of PLS-SEM to estimate scores for latent variables (HAIR et al. 2021). So the search engine runs twice, in different stages:

- estimation of the main effect model – without interaction effect;
- estimation of the whole model – with an interaction effect (HAIR et al. 2021, HENSELER 2021).

Thus, Hair et al. (2021), the evaluation of moderating effects should focus on the results of R^2 and f^2. Thus, the real consumption and travel $\mathbf{R^2}$ is 75%, which is a relevant explanatory force and attributes a proper fit to the model. Comparing the result after applying the moderators, R^2 attributes a 1% better fit to the model. When using moderators for $\mathbf{f^2}$, we examine the extent to which moderation contributed to the explanation of the endogenous construct. However, during moderation, the thresholds change, thus distinguishing between negligible (below 0.005), weak (between 0.005 and 0.01), medium (between 0.01 and 0.025), and strong (above 0.025) effects (HAIR et al. 2021). In this case, the strength of the destination as a moderating effect on real consumption and travel is strong (f^2=0.032), even the effect of Covid-19 is negligible (f^2=0.002). Comparing the obtained results, it can be said that in the case of Covid-19 the strength of the effect did not change even in the case of the destination, after the moderation the negligible effect was replaced by the strong effect. The evaluation of moderator hypotheses is explained in Chapter 8.1.

During the analysis, I examined the predictive relevance of the model based on the blindfolding procedure. This analysis allows the calculation of Stone-Geisser's $\mathbf{Q^2}$ value, which is a criterion for evaluating the cross-validated predictive relevance of the PLS path model (HAIR et al. 2017). This method is based on the sample re-use technique, which systematically deletes data points and then provides a prediction of the original value. The recommended omission value is between 5 and 12, in the study by Hair et al. (2017), I gave the omission distance as 7. If the Q^2 value is greater than 0, it indicates that the PLS path model has predictive relevance to this construct (HAIR et al. 2017). The test result is 0.633 for consumption intent and 0.676 for real consumption and travel, which is of high relevance in both cases. Thus, exogenous constructs have sufficient predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs.

8. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter of the dissertation, the results of the research are presented through the hypotheses.

8.1. Testing the hypotheses

Acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses of the structural model (*Table 26*) is possible based on the value of the **path coefficients**, i.e. the standardized regression coefficients **(β)**, which can be determined by the bootstrapping procedure in the case of PLS-SEM. With this method, we can learn about the dependency relationship between independent and dependent constructs and its strength and direction. During the analysis, 4999 samples were set, even the t-test was interpreted at the level of 0.95. The aim of the dissertation was to answer the research question on **how do gastronomic influences affect the outcome of a gastronomically motivated consumption intent on a social platform called Instagram?** This chapter answers the research question by testing the hypotheses. After testing the hypotheses, I came to the following results:

Hypothesis	Acceptance
H1: Consumer activity on Instagram is positively related to gastronomic intent.	Rejected
H2: The gastronomic influencer has a positive effect on gastronomic consumption intent.	Accapted
H3: The consumer's consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent.	Rejected
H4: The perceived behavioral control of the consumer towards consumption in the restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent	Accapted
H5a: Gastronomic consumption intent has a positive effect on real gastronomic consumption and travel.	Accapted
H5b: The role of destination has a positive effect on the relationship between gastronomic consumption intent and real consumption and travel.	Accapted
H5c: The Covid-19 epidemic negatively affects consumers' real gastronomic consumption and travel	Rejected

Table 26: Evaluation of hypotheses
Source: Elaborated by the author

H1: Consumer activity on Instagram is positively related to gastronomic consumption intent.

Consumer activity for Instagram and gastrointestinal intent means that an increase in the independent variable (activity) is associated with a decrease in the dependent variable (intent to consume). Thus, there is a negative and insignificant relationship between consumer activity and gastronomic consumption intent (β=–0.003; t=0.132). The hypothesis is **rejected**. Thus, my assumption that more active consumer participation on the Instagram side is positively related to gastronomic consumption intentions has not been substantiated.

H2: The gastronomic influencer has a positive effect on gastronomic consumption intent.

Examining the second hypothesis, it can be said that there is a positive and significant relationship between the gastronomic influencer and the gastronomic consumption intent (β=0.598; t=10.460). The hypothesis is **accepted**. So, my assumption that the influencer has an effect on the consumer's decision-making process and that the effect of the influencers on the Instagram side has a positive effect on the consumer's gastronomic consumption intent has been confirmed.

H3: The consumer's consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent.

Regarding the third hypothesis, it can be said that there is a positive, but not significant, relationship between the consumption attitude and the gastronomic consumption intention (β=0.018; t=0.607). The hypothesis is thus **rejected**. So, my assumption that the consumers' consumption attitude in a restaurant is positively related to their behavioral intent that affects their gastronomic consumption intent has not been substantiated. Attitude testing is an integral part of the planned behavioral model and has had a positive and significant effect on behavioral intent in other studies (CHUNG 2016 and TING et al. 2019). However, in this context, the relationship between attitude and behavioral intent is positive and not significant.

H4: The perceived behavioral control of the consumer towards consumption in a restaurant is positively related to the gastronomic consumption intent.

The relationship between the perceived behavioral control of the consumer and the gastronomic intent to consume is the fourth hypothesis, which can be examined to show that there is a positive and significant relationship between them (β=0.271; t=5.007). Based on this, the hypothesis is **accepted**. So, my assumption is that the consumer's perceived behavioral control over consumption in the restaurant facilitates the consumer's gastronomic consumption intent has been confirmed, because there is a positive relationship between them.

H5a: The intention to consume gastronomy has a positive effect on real consumption and travel for gastronomic purposes.

In the fifth research question, three hypotheses were formulated, the first of which tests the direct relationship between gastronomic consumption intent and real gastronomic consumption and travel. Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be said that there is a positive and significant relationship between the two constructs (β=0.834; t=40.693). Thus, the hypothesis is **accepted**. So, my hypothesis that consumers who have a gastronomic consumption intent are realized as real consumption or travel has been proven.

H5b: The role of destination has a positive effect on the relationship between gastronomic intent and real consumption and travel.

The second hypothesis of the fifth research question focuses on the moderating effect of the destination between the constructs of gastronomic consumption intent and real gastronomic consumption and travel. The result of testing the hypothesis shows a positive and significant relationship (β=0.090; t=4.204), based on which the hypothesis is **accepted**. So, my assumption that destination has a positive effect on the relationship between these two variables has been confirmed.

H5c: The Covid-19 epidemic negatively affects consumers' real gastronomic consumption and travel.

The focus of the third and final hypothesis of the fifth research question focuses on Covid-19 as a moderating construct. Based on the results of testing the hypothesis, it can be said that the relationship is positive, but not significant (β = 0.021; t = 0.934), so the hypothesis is **rejected**. That is, my assumption that consumption patterns have changed as a result of the Pandemic and this will have an impact on post-epidemic consumption behavior and real consumption and travel has not been substantiated.

In addition to *Table 26*, *Figure 16* illustrates the acceptance of the hypotheses, where the values and significance of the standardized path coefficient are also shown**.**

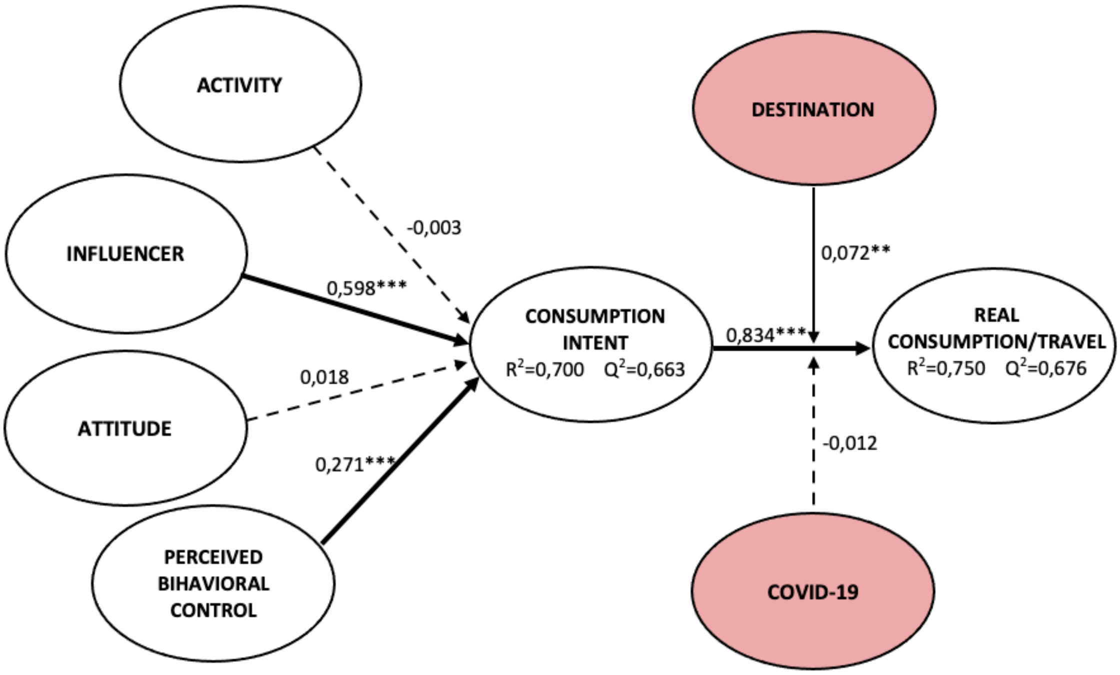

Figure 26: Result of hypothesis testing
Source: Elaborated by the author based on SmartPLS 3.0 software
*Note: Bootstrapping 95% confidence interval, 4999 samples, one-tailed test. * p <0.05; ** <0.01; *** <0.001 (Hernandez-Rojas et al. 2021)*

8.2. Analysis of further results

After examining the hypotheses, I also performed other analyzes using the SPSS 27 software. Although, the hypotheses regarding activity and Covid-19 have been rejected, I believe that further elaboration of the questions may provide valuable results for future research. Furthermore, further examination of the issue of the impact of the destination may provide valuable information.

In the research, I had the opportunity to examine the level of activity, however, the number of items did not allow for multi-group analysis, so I used SPSS 27 software to perform further analyzes. I primarily examined the relationship between the activity level of Instagram users and the role of destination, using cross-tabulations. At the activity level, three cases can be distinguished: passive users (n=75), who only observe (lurkers) on social media, average users (n=215), who are present on the platform but only like posts, and active users (n=131), who express their opinions, produce content and also communicate on Instagram.

The relationship between **activity level** and **intention to travel** to try a restaurant is **weak** based on Phi and Cramer V indicators (0.261 and 0.185). Furthermore, the **significance** level for Pearson's Chi-square test is less than 0.001, so there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Based on the results (*Figure 17*), passive and average users are characterized by uncertainty (passive 46.7%, average 37.7%), so there has been an example of them traveling to try a restaurant. However, overall, looking at their responses, they are more likely to travel to try a restaurant (passive 70.7%, average 70.7%). While active users are more likely to travel to try out a restaurant (84.7%).

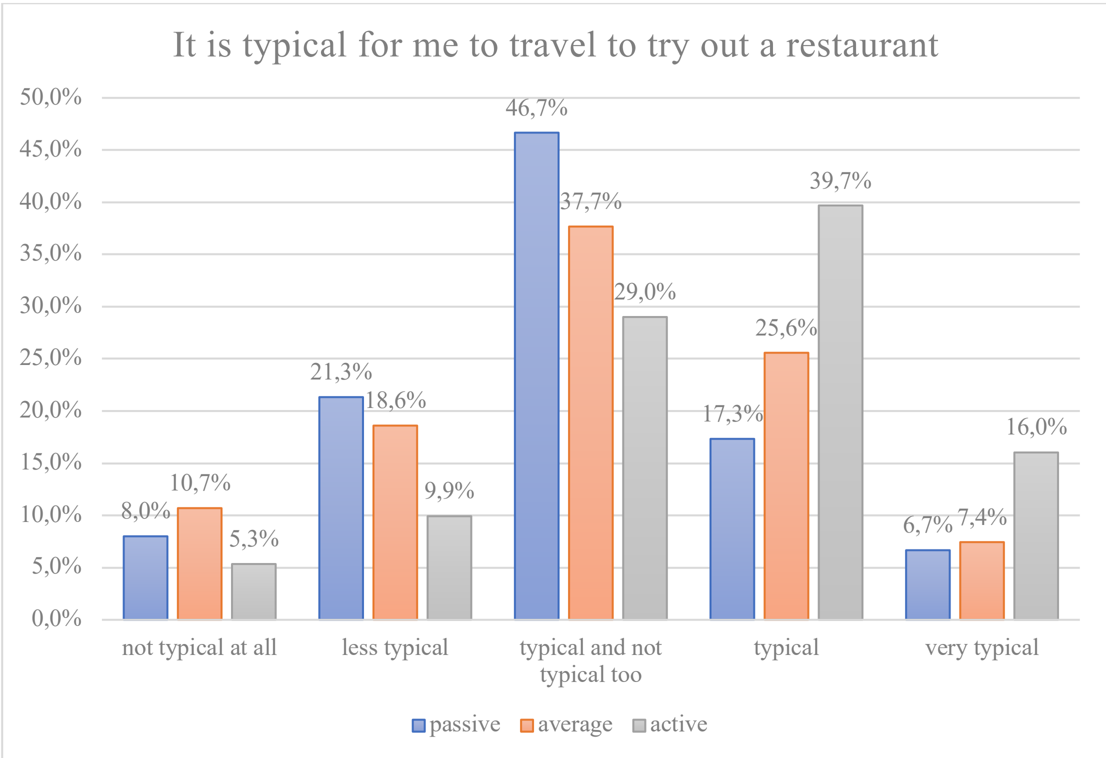

Figure 17: Travel resulting from testing a restaurant by activity level
Source: Elaborated by the author based on SPSS 27 software

The incentive effect of gastronomic specialties and **activity level** in relation to the **intention to revisit** is **weak** based on Phi and Cramer V indicators (0.251 and 0.178). Furthermore, the significance level for Pearson's Chi-square test is less than 0.001 so there is a **significant** relationship between the two variables. Based on *Figure 18*, it can be said that the incentive effect of gastronomic specialties on the intention to revisit is characteristic of each segment (passive 89.4%, average 89.8%, active 94.6%).

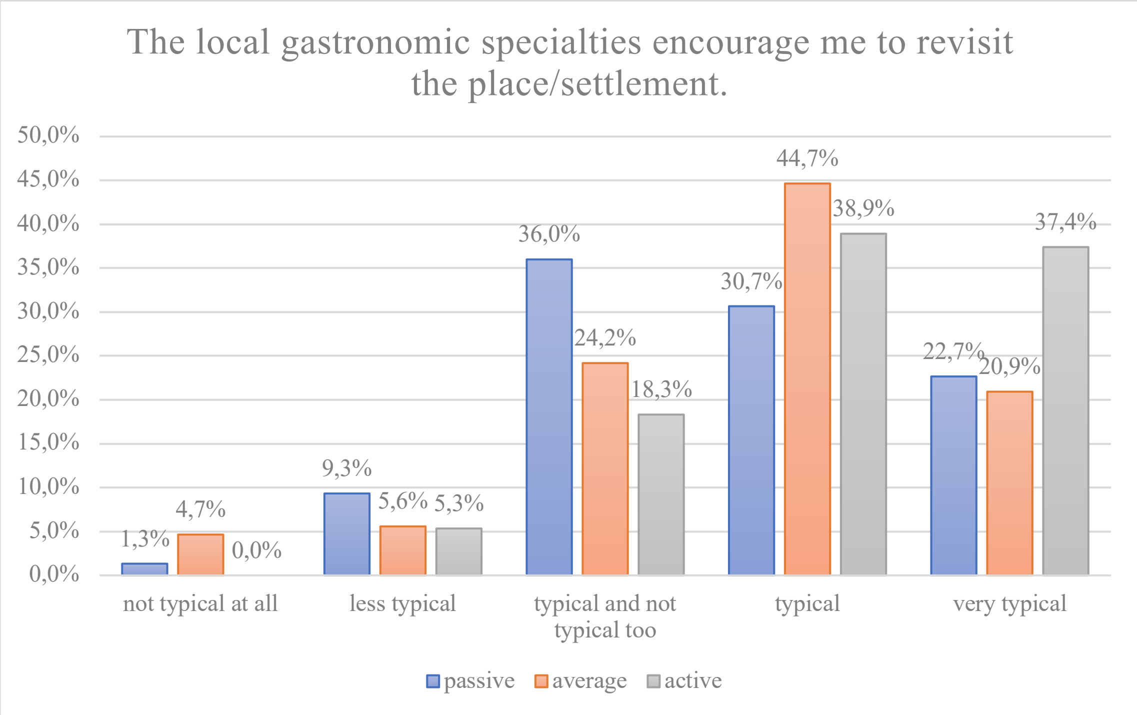

Figure 18: The effect of gastronomic specialties on the intention to revisit according to the level of activity

Source: Elaborated by the author based on SPSS 27 software

Due to the coronavirus has greatly affected the hospitality industry, in my research asked Instagram users about **the transformation of their hospitality habits under the influence of Covid-19.** As a result of the research (*Figure 19*), it can be said that the appearance of the coronavirus does not change the eating habits of 43.7% of the respondents, while the second largest group is 29.2% of those who will pay attention to community distance in the restaurant.

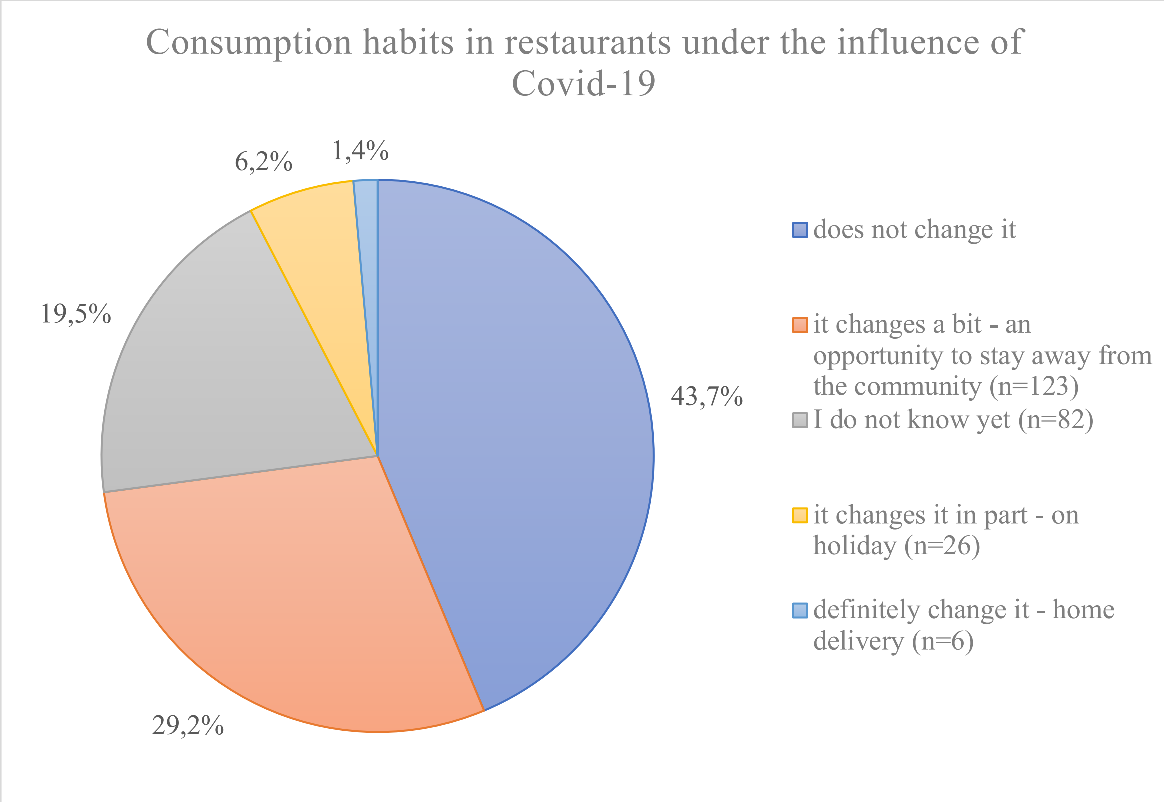

Figure 19: Transformation of consumer catering habits as a result of Covid-19
Source: Elaborated by the author based on SPSS 27 software

So, in terms of differentiating the level of activity, it can be said that those who are more active on Instagram are also willing to travel to visit a restaurant. Also, the gastronomic specialties have an incentive effect on the intention to revisit in all three segments. The appearance of the coronavirus in 36.8% of the respondents results in some level change in the habit of going to a restaurant.

The research did not aim to achieve representativeness among the different activity level segments of Instagram users, so I am unable to draw any further conclusions.

9. SUMMARY

In the last chapter of the dissertation, I present the theoretical, methodological and practical significance of the work, as well as the reliability, validity, and transparency of the research. I will also explore the limitations of the research and, finally, address future research opportunities.

9.1. Theoretical, methodological and practical significance of research

The results of the doctoral dissertation are in line with the current development of the domestic and international tourism literature. This statement is supported by three prominent parts of the literature in my dissertation, which greatly contribute to the expansion of the literature in the field. The first such element is Chapter 2 of the dissertation, in which, in addition to gaining a complex picture of the research opportunities of gastronomic tourism and its collaboration with other tourism products, further theoretical deepening of the topic is explored from various aspects such as definition grouping, research focus points perspectives, and the disciplinary context. Based on all this, gastronomic tourism is a dynamically developing branch of tourism, which according to the literature review appears as a niche segment in the supply of tourism products, thus offering an authentic and memorable experience for consumers/tourists with conscious development and segmentation strategy. An important tool for this is influencer marketing, as visualization is important in the selection of a restaurant among Instagram users (HENNIG-THURAU et al. 2004, TÖRŐCSIK 2014, REKETTYE et al 2016, LEE et al. 2021). The second element that I value as a literature contribution is the placement of the influencer topic in the literature, which I start from the e-WOM literature and guide me through to consumer decision-making process, from which I consistently build the third element, which is the consumer activity. The most prominent part in the topic of influencer is the definition of the influencer phenomenon itself, as well as the mechanism of the effect of influencers on their followers, the key to which is the visualization already mentioned. Even in connection with e-WOM and online opinions, several Hungarian-language researches are known, until then there is less research on the topic of influencers (see eg VARGA–PANYI 2018, GULD 2019a, 2019b, KOVÁCS et al. 2019, GÁLIK–CSORDÁS 2020) compared to the international literature. I begin the unfolding of consumer activity in the literature with consumer behavior, where the theory is based on e-WOM, which I focus on consumer social media activity. During the analysis, I describe models that contribute to the detailed analysis of the consumer activity literature. One such model is the theory of planned behavioral model designed by Ajzen (1991), which also forms the basis of the research model. Although the summaries at the end of the chapters and the literature review are presented in the context of gastronomic tourism, the findings can be adapted to other areas of research that address consumer behavior. The aim of the dissertation – which is described in Chapter 6.1. – in addition to the literature analysis of the topic, is to use new moderators (destination and Covid-19) in my doctoral research and expand an existing model (TPB model) to test a new theoretical concept. Within the model, the study of the relationship between gastronomic influencers and intention of gastronomic consumption is also novel in the field of tourism research. Thus, it can be said that the aim of the dissertation has been achieved and the result of my research represents a high theoretical contribution in both the domestic and international tourism literature.

Thus, representativeness was not a priority in the research, as the focus was on testing and modeling a theoretical concept based on consumer survey, so the focus was on examining causal relationships. Therefore, in response to the research question, it can be said that on the Instagram interface, influencers have a positive and significant effect on consumer decision-making on the outcome of gastronomically motivated consumption intentions. Furthermore, the role of destination characteristics has a positive effect on the relationship between gastronomic intent and real consumption and travel among Instagram users. Although the activity hypothesis was rejected based on the PLS-SEM analysis, the analysis with SPSS software reflects an important result. Thus, there is a weak but significant relationship between activity and the intention to travel to try a restaurant. Further analysis of the variables showed that it was typical for active users to travel to try the restaurant. Even the incentive effect of gastronomic specialties on the intention of revisiting proved to be characteristic of Instagram users for all three levels of activity (passive, average and active). It is also an important result that the attitude, which is one of the basic elements of the TPB model, is not significantly related to the intention of consumption in the present research context. That is, other research in the field of hospitality, such as consumer satisfaction, sustainable hospitality and environmental protection, healthy living, and post-consuming behavior in restaurants (CHENG et al.

2005, KIM, Y. et al. 2013, JANG et al. 2015, CHUNG 2016, JUN–ARENDT 2016, SALZBERG et al. 2019) and consumer attitudes show a positive and significant relationship, although in the present research this relationship is not significant. Therefore, further research is needed to understand why the relationship between attitude and consumption intention was not significantly positive in the present research context. In terms of results, it is important to highlight the strong moderating strength of destination, therefore the real consumption and travel R^2 value become 75%, which is a serious explanatory force. So, based on research, it can be said that the role of destination has a positive effect on real consumption and therefore travel. One of the outstanding elements of the analysis of the PLS-SEM model is the Q^2 value, which represents the predictivity of the model. Therefore, the values obtained, 0.633 (intent to consume) and 0.676 (real consumption and travel), therefore indicate that the model shows high predictive relevance. Based on the hypotheses most of the correlations tested by the empirical method were confirmed, so their scientific significance was strengthened. Even the refuted hypotheses led to useful conclusions, predicting further research opportunities.

The emergence of the coronavirus is a new factor in the potential for hygiene and health risks. This is also an important result, with more than a third of Instagram users believing that the appearance of Covid-19 will change the way they go to a restaurant to some extent. The respondents highlighted the importance of social distance in restaurants.

Thus, the practical significance of the dissertation may be useful for the hospitality industry in the tourism and leisure sector, and for service providers who also use online media and influencer marketing. Whereas influencer marketing can be used by service providers in three areas (content creation and promotion, product launch, e.g. seasonal menu), influencers can more easily attract consumers to restaurants, which appears to service providers as a more cost-effective marketing tool. The coronavirus results can also be a valuable source of information for providers to consider reducing the potential for hygiene and health risks. The results of the research can also be of interest to service providers and TDM organizations in terms of destination development. Mainly in terms of the intention to revisit and by considering the possibility of developing a destination based on gastronomy.

The methodological significance of the doctoral dissertation includes the method of analysis of structural equations and the adaptation of structural model building in the field of consumption intentions of gastronomic tourism. In researching the literature, I did not find any publications that examined the present topic using the PLS-SEM method and used the variables that I used. The process of scale development is also important in the Hungarian literature, although the scales used to measure latent variables have already been used in other international publications (which supports the reliability and validity criteria), their novelty is their adaptation to the topic. The application of PLS-SEM modeling in the field of tourism research is also significant in the Hungarian literature, as only five tourism-related articles were produced using this method in the period 2016-2020 (KEMÉNY 2021). The methodological procedure is also widely supported in the international literature, so international publications of the dissertation also support it.

In the detailed description and justification of the research, the description and testing of the reliability and validity aspects and the methods to test them were presented. Throughout the research, these aspects were considered and I sought to do so during the design of the sample. The primary goal of the research was to explore the multifaceted and complex process and context of gastronomically motivated consumption intention. However, it is difficult for both professionals and researchers to measure the impact of influenza on consumers, so research provides an opportunity to learn about consumer behavior and the possible outcome of their behavior. Thus, the empirical results of the present research can also be used in the fields of general marketing and management.

In general, knowing the theoretical, practical and methodological significance, it can be said that the literature, research methodology, and results of the dissertation have met the challenges of domestic and international research and are in line with the development of tourism research trends.

9.2. Limitations of the research and future research opportunities

Despite the contributions learned in the previous chapter, the research had its limitations, which also anticipate future research opportunities. The biggest limitation of the research is the number of elements that could not be completed due to the appearance of Covid-19.

The research process was greatly hampered by the emergence of the coronavirus and the resulting restaurant closures and travel restrictions. As a result, it was not possible to interview consumers at the restaurant site. Thus, the number of restaurant respondents was insufficient, and consequently, the number of items did not allow for:

- a comparative analysis between restaurant consumers and influencers' followers,
- comparative analysis among restaurant consumers who use and non-use Instagram,
- and the multi-group analysis planned on the basis of the activity level was not analyzed either.

Therefore, based on these, I would mention the extension of the research after the coronavirus and, in the case of a larger number of items, the three analysis options listed above. All three cases contain valuable results on the behavior of gastronomic consumers, and, due to the predictive nature of modeling, their important results could serve as a basis for future research and contribute to the design of the catering industry as well as the work of marketers.

In addition to the listing, travel restrictions also had an impact on the inquiry of tourism-related issues. Therefore, I did not have the opportunity to ask respondents about their travel habits, such as how far and for how long they travel. So, among the possible future researches, it is definitely expedient to clarify these topics in connection with the behavior of gastronomic consumers.

As a further research opportunity, I would mention a deeper examination of the variables of the discarded hypotheses, thus:

- a focus group study using a qualitative research method of the relationship between consumer activity, attitude, and consumption intention,
- a wide-ranging questionnaire survey of consumers about their eating habits on their own and then supplemented with the effect of Covid-19 characteristics on the intention to consume.

The novelty of the present research is also reflected in the fact that gastronomy on social media platforms, which also serve as an important marketing tool for the hospitality industry, and strengthens the camp of always interesting topics. Thus, one of my research suggestions is to extend the research to the TikTok interface. Because on TikTok, users share short videos and influencers are also present on this platform. Furthermore, gastronomic entries are popular on TikTok. For example, in the United States, it is already possible for consumers/users to order the most popular recipes that are spreading virally in only the delivery focused TikTok Kitchen (TOURISM ONLINE 2021).

Finally, in addition to financial and time support, I recommend that the research be conducted internationally and that the results be compared, which may also contain interesting information for gastrocultural and social media consumption for both the research and service communities.

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ANNEX

Annex 1: The literature used is from Tables 2 and 5

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Source: Elaborated by the author

Annex 2: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent!

My name is Orsolya Szakály, I am a Ph.D. student at the Corvinus University of Budapest. With this questionnaire, I examine the effects of gastronomic influencers on consumers when choosing a restaurant on Instagram. What role does consumer activity on the platform and the role of the venue where the restaurant is located play in this process. The Covid-19 pandemic that has emerged over the past year also has an influential role to the research, so in the first phase of completing the questionnaire, please think about the period between March 2019-2020 (before the epidemic period) and fill in the questionnaire based on it!
Thank you in advance for participating in the research!

FQ1. Do you use Intagram? (for restaurant questionnaire)

- Yes
- No

FQ2. Do you follow gastronomic content on Instagram? (for restaurant questionnaire)

- Yes
- No

Q1. Do you follow the mentioned influencers on Instagram? (for restaurant questionnaire)

- Szauer Judit – @gasztro_pr, @balatonigasztroterkep
- Jókuti András – @jokuti
- I follow other influencers, namely: _____________
- I do not follow influencers

Q1. On whose side did you find the questionnaire?

- Szauer Judit – @gasztro_pr, @balatonigasztroterkep
- Jókuti András – @jokuti

Q2. Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 how characteristic you feel about the following statements about your use of Instagram, where 1 is not typical at all and 5 is very typical!

	1	2	3	4	5
I like the pictures of those who follow me on Instagram					
I share my experiences on Instagram					
I regularly search for information on Instagram					
I keep in touch with my friends on Instagram.					

Q3. My presence on Instagram is typically...

1. passive, I am just looking at the pictures
2. average, I like the posts
3. active, I like writing posts and comments
4. outstandingly active, I myself create content on a regular basis
5. I am an influencer

Q4. Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 how characteristic you feel about the following statements!
Eating in a restaurant is...for me:

useless activity	1	2	3	4	5	usefull activity (e.g. learning a new taste, learning a new cooking technology)
boring activity	1	2	3	4	5	fun activity
not satisfy activity	1	2	3	4	5	satisfy activity

Q5. Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 how characteristic you feel about the following statements about your use of Instagram, where 1 is not typical at all and 5 is very typical!

	1	2	3	4	5
I choose a restaurant based on the recommendation of the influencers.					
On the recommendation of the influencers, I visit gastronomic places (settlements).					
Based on the recommendations of the influencers, I taste local, typical dishes.					
I regularly gather information from influencers before I go to a restaurant.					
I am confident that I will be able to revisit the restaurants suggested by influencers again in the near future.					
I have enough money to try the restaurants recommended by the influencers.					
I have enough time to try the restaurants recommended by the influencers.					
My opinion of the restaurant is influenced by the experience of influencers in relation to the restaurant.					
I am not interested in the offer of restaurants and other attractions that can only be found on the spot.					
I am interested in the location/ settlements and other attractions, and if I go there, I will check the offer of the restaurants in the spot.					
It is typical for me to travel to try a restaurant.					
The local gastronomic specialties encourage me to revisit the place/settlement. (I will revisit the places where I ate well).					
I plan to travel to a restaurant recommended by influencer in the near future.					
I intend to consume it in a restaurant recommended by influencer in the near future.					
In the near future, I intend to choose a restaurant based on the suggestion of the influencer I am following.					
I will be eating at the restaurant that the influencer I followed advised.					
Typically, I choose a restaurant based on the suggestion of influencers.					
I will continue to visit the restaurant recommended by the influencer in the future.					

Q6. Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 how characteristic you feel about the following statements! **In the period following the Covid-19 pandemic,...**

... I expect to consume less in restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	... I expect to consume more in restaurants

Q7. **The Covid-19 epidemic is expected to change my way of going to restaurants as follows:**

1. don't change it as soon as I can go to restaurants
2. change it a bit, I will go to restaurants where there is a possibility to stay away from the community
3. I don't know yet in what direction the epidemic will change my habits of visiting restaurants
4. partially changes it, I only try to go to a restaurant occasionally (on holidays, birthdays, etc.)
5. definitely change, due to the pandemic, I will continue to choose home delivery in the future

Q8. Year of birth: _________________

Q9. Gender:

1. Woman
2. Man

Q10. Marital status:

1. Single
2. Living in a relationship
3. Married
4. Divorced

5. Widow
6. Other: _____________

Q11. Education:
1. Less than 8 class
2. Primary school
3. High school
4. Skilled labor
5. College degree
6. University degree
7. Doctoral degree
8. Other: ______________

Q12. Labor market status:
1. Employee
2. Contractor
3. Casual worker
4. Unemployed
5. Retired
6. Household
7. Student
8. Student and part-time
9. Student and full-time
10. Other: ________________

Q13. Residence:
1. Budapest
2. County seat
3. Other city
4. Village
5. Other: _________________
6. Abroad, namely: _______________

Q14. Income level (net value per capital):
1. Under 100.000 HUF
2. Between 100.001 – 250.000 HUF
3. Between 250.001 – 400.000 HUF
4. Between 400.001 – 650.000 HUF
5. Above 650.001 HUF
6. student, dependent on a parent / guardian

Source: Elaborated by the author

Annex 3: Notation of variables

Manifest variables or indicators	Latent variable	Notation	Manifest variables or indicators	Latent variable	Notation
Act_1		X1	CI_1		Y1
Act _2		X2	CI_2		Y2
Act _3		X3	CI_3		Y3
Act _4		X4		Consumpton intent	η1
	Activity	ξ1			
Influ_1		X1	RCT_1		Y1
Influ_2		X2	RCT_2		Y2
Influ_3		X3	RCT_3		Y3
Influ_4		X4		Real consumption/travel	η2
	Influencer	ξ2			
Att_1		X1			
Att_2		X2			
Att_3		X3			
Att_4		X4			
Att_5		X5			
	Attitude	ξ3			
PBC_1		X1			
PBC_2		X2			
PBC_3		X3			
PBC_4		X4			
PBC_5		X5			
	Perceived behavioral control	ξ4			

Source: Elaborated by the author

Note:

X – independent variable, indicator

Y – dependent variable, indicator

ξ – latent independent, exogenous variable

η – latent dependent, endogenous variable

Annex 4: List of publications by the author in the dissertation's topic

Refereed journal articles:

SZIVA, I. – SIMON J. – SZAKÁLY O. (2017): Gastronomy as a new way of exploring tourism destinations, particularly in the case of Budapest. Marketing és Menedzsment, 51, 72-82.

SZAKÁLY, O. (2022): Segmentation of gastronomic consumers following Instagram influencers based on destination preferences. Marketing & Management, 56(2), 35-46. DOI: 10.15170/MM.2022.56.02.04.

SZAKÁLY, O. (2023): A gasztronómiai fogyasztók szegmentálása az online aktivitás és az influencer követés szemszögéből. Turizmus Bulletin, 23(1), *IN PRESS.*

Other journal articles:

SZAKÁLY, O. (2019a): Effects of influencers in a destination –The case of Lake Balaton. Atlas Tourism and Leisure Review, 3, 28-43.

Conference presentation and/or appearance in book of proceedings:

PINKE-SZIVA, I. – SIMON, J. – SZAKÁLY, O. (2019): Egy tematikus utca újrapozícionálása és márkázása Budapesten. In: Csapó, J. – Gonda, T. Raffay, Z. (szerk.) Turizmus, fogyasztás, generációk: II. Nemzetközi Turizmus Konferencia: Tanulmánykötet , Pécs, Magyarország: Pécsi Tudományegyetem Közgazdaságtudományi Kar (PTE KTK) (2019) 487 p.

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SZIVA, I. – SIMON J. – SZAKÁLY O. (2017): A gasztronómia szerepe a Budapest-élményben a nemzetközi utazók szemével. In: BÁNYAI, E. – LÁNYI, B. – TÖRŐCSIK, M. (szerk.): Tükröződés, társtudományok, trendek, fogyasztás: Egyesület a Marketing Oktatásért és kutatásért (EMOK) XXIII. országos konferencia: Tanulmánykötet, 221-229.

Book chapters:

PINKE-SZIVA, I. – SZAKÁLY, O. – CORONEL, M. – BALABAN, E. (2021): Researches supporting the surrounding business and social environment: Positioning and branding of a thematic street in District IX, Budapest. In: KEMÉNY, I. – KUN, Zs. (eds.): New perspectives in serving customers, patients, and organizations: A Festschrift for Judit Simon. Budapest, Magyarország, Corvinus University of Budapest. 248 p.

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