

# Segmentation of gastronomic consumers following Instagram influencers based on destination preferences and the effect of Covid-19 on their consumption

**Orsolya Szakály**

Corvinus University of Budapest

DOI: 10.15170/MM.2022.56.02.04.

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## THE AIM OF THE PAPER

The aim of the study is to explore the impact of gastronomic influencers on Instagram on consumer decision before choosing a restaurant. It also examines the role of the characteristics of destination in consumer decision-making process. The article also highlights the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on consumers' decision process in that context.

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## METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze the main research questions, a quantitative survey with 329 valid responses was implemented and descriptive statistics, relationship analysis methods and linear regression were used to answer the research questions. The research question also required the use of a subsample (n=185) in which respondents who are willing to travel for gastronomic purposes were examined during the Pandemic.

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## MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

According to the results, the collection of information from gastronomic influencers on the Instagram interface is popular among the respondents, and the influencers' activity has a positive effect on the number of visitors to the destinations. Thus, it can be said that the relationship between the influencer and the destination is characterized by a significant, medium strength relationship. Furthermore, the results also revealed that the Pandemic has led to an increase in consumers' intentions to consume in restaurants.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

As social media plays an increasingly important role in the decision-making process, it is important that professionals, service providers and researchers explore the views of consumers in the context under study. The results are highlighted in terms of destination development and in terms of consumer behavior.

*Keywords:* influencer, destination, gastronomy, Instagram

## INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy plays an important 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 (Töröcsik & Pál 2015) and their consumption intentions. Gastronomy also plays an important role in the development of destinations (Gordin & Trabskaya 2013), so online opinion-sharing platforms on food have a significant impact on the everyday life of the destination, with a positive impact on visiting a tourist destination (Chen et al. 2014). Destinations use gastronomy as a marketing tool to promote their culture, to which tourism is the link, connecting them with the consumer and providing an offer to consumers (Gyimóthy 1999).

Social media provides an opportunity for consumers to express their opinions through online communication. In addition, influencers have appeared on community platforms to influence consumers in their decision-making with their recommendations. Content-sharing platforms are valuable sources of information in consumer decision-making, and products and services that are known in an experiential way come to the forefront of selection. As it is possible to share visual materials (photos, videos) in the virtual space, the source of information is also more secure. Thus, consumer power has been strengthened, so online communities are able to influence the decisions of companies and service providers, and consumers expect social and economic actors to respond to their expectations (Reketye et al. 2016). The microcelebrities followed by many users, the so-called Instagram celebrities, also act as opinion-formers who refer to a product or service in a subtle or more open way for financial support or product (samples) (Glózer 2018, Veszelszki 2019).

The present research also examined the impact of Covid-19 on consumer consumption habits in restaurants. In Hungary, many restaurants switched to alternative modes of operation by home delivery during the virus epidemic. In addition to home delivery, contactless payment has become available through various applications and online platforms, as well as through partnerships with companies specializing in delivery (Food Panda, Wolt) (Tóth 2020). Furthermore, restaurant habits have changed with the onset of the epidemic, which is likely to affect hospitality in the long run, such as social distancing, the thinning of tables, and the proliferation of residential restaurants (Tóth 2020, Dube et al. 2021).

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Gastronomy tourism and the role of destination*

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 (UNWTO 2012). If we examine the definitions from the perspective of the tourism product, we can say that gourmet tourism is a distinct subset of tourism, which targets a smaller segment of consumers (Hjalager & Richards 2002, Gordin & Trabskaya 2013, Hernández-Mogollón et al. 2015). With a view to the development of destination, gastronomy is the key element of the tourist experience. (Hall & Mitchell 2005, Okumus et al. 2007, UNWTO 2012, Sziva et al. 2017).

Ellish et al. (2018) interpreted the role of destination in a more general way in his research. He believes that experience, motivation, gastronomy, the place itself, and culture play a role in delimiting the destination. The role of the destination also stands out in the definition of gastronomic tourism, as the tourist gets to know the food and drinks of a given destination during his trip (Hall et al. 2003, Kivela & Crofts 2006, Gordin & Trabskaya 2013). According to Baah et al. (2020), gastronomic tourism has become a practical area of interest for developing destinations. Ellish et al. (2018) argue that gastronomy is a “cultural artefact” of the destination, so gastronomy means image and position for the destination.

Consumers' decision over tourism (such as choosing a destination) are inevitably influenced by social media (Kovács et al. 2019, Soliman 2019). 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 influencers 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 the Crocodile Dundee films led to significant visitor growth (Glover 2009). Tourist influencer campaigns became massive in 2018.

## *The role of influencers and the relationship with destination*

Influencers are individuals who influence the real or perceived decisions of consumers on social media based on their knowledge, authority, position, and relationships (Gretzel 2018). Cheung & Thadani (2010) mentioned interpersonal communication as a new sector of e-WOM. This interaction of consumers is also reflected in marketing. Influencers are present on social platforms where, as users, they have the opportunity to share the content they create, opinions, and views (Oliveira et al. 2020). According to Varga & Panyi (2018) and Keller & Fay (2016), influencers or opinion leaders are individuals who, through online communication, influence their followers with their personal opinions in a way that partially or even completely changes their ideas. 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 has the strongest impact on the target audience to persuade them by incorporating the product or service into his communication (Wong, 2014). The three most important areas of influencer marketing, where marketers employ influencers, are: content promotion, product launch, and content creation itself (Gretzel 2018). 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 that 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 most cases, influencers have a positive effect on consumers purchasing intention, brand awareness, and brand trust (Hung 2014, Albert et al. 2017, Xu & Pratt 2018).

The development of social media has helped spread information about tourist destinations and local food. Travelers increasingly use social platforms (Wang 2011, Magno & Cassia 2018, Lou & Yuan 2019, Ingrassia et al. 2022). Ingrassia et al. (2022) argues that at all stages of the travel experience, travelers have more confidence in the online ratings of other travelers than in tourism providers, and e-WOM is more important than in some other sectors. 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 informa-

tion (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004, Töröcsik 2014). The source of credibility has a great influence in 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). In recent years, Instagram has emerged as an active platform for tourism and the food industry (Kim & Stepchenkova 2015), as the visual image is an effective tool to guide potential behavior (Ingrassia et al. 2022). Several studies (Chaulagain et al. 2019, Arefieva et al. 2021) highlight the impact of visual content on destination image formation, as one of the main influencing criteria for travel intentions and play a crucial role in revisiting intention.

Lee et al. (2021) believe that influencer marketing is popular in the hospitality sector because it is cost-effective and easier to attract consumers. This is due to service providers taking advantage of the “wow” factor that influencers achieve with food photos and videos. In the intensifying market competition, targeted restaurant marketing, online presence, and brand awareness may increase consumption, but to do so, gastronomic influencers need to be knowledgeable about the industry (Patel 2018, Lee et al. 2021).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To answer the research questions: “what is the effect of the influencers, consumers' destination preferences and Covid-19 regarding the consumers gastronomic consumption”, a quantitative research method was adopted. The data used in the research are primary in nature. The data recording was requested to be retrieved on a single occasion. During the research, the data were collected using an online questionnaire (Malhotra & Simon 2009, Gyulavári et al. 2015).

The collection methods of the questionnaire respondents were characterized by random sampling. The research was conducted in Hungary, where influencers and Instagram use have started to spread in recent years (Guld 2019). The research was based on the netnographic research of Szakály (2019), which identified the importance of the use of Instagram and the presence of influencers in the hospitality industry. The selection of gastronomic influencers was stratified using a database called StarNgage (2020), which is an online portal and online marketplace that helps different brands and influencers from different social platforms to work

together. So, the portal ranks influencers based on the number of followers and their interests, so users can rank influencers by country and topic. However, the disadvantage of this ranking is that influencers have multiple interests that cannot be separated from each other. Hence, not only gastronomy, but also lifestyle, fitness, beauty care, and much more appear in their interests. The selection of influencers was a serious task, as the 100 most well-known gastronomy-themed influencers were analyzed based on the specified criteria. So, in this study, the selected influencers are those who visit restaurants and travel for this purpose, too. Based on it, two influencers were selected: Judit Szauder (@gasztro\_pr) and András Jókuti (@jokuti). They were also chosen because their active presence on Instagram even during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following research questions were analyzed:

1. What kind of effect do influencers have on the restaurant consumption on gastronomic consumers?
2. What kind of effect does the attitude towards the destination attractiveness have on consumers who travel for gastronomic purposes and follow influencers?
3. What kind of effect does the appearance of Covid-19 have on restaurant consumption of gastronomic consumers in general and those who travel for gastronomic purposes?

The statements were based on similar previous studies that were presented during the literature review, to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the scale measurement statements, and the second part contained demographic questions. The scale statements consisted of two parts (influencer and destination). The statements (Table 1) were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree and 5: strongly agree). The questionnaire also included two statements on the Covid-19 pandemic, based on Riestyningrum et al. (2020) and Akter et al. (2021) suggesting that a pandemic has an impact on changes in consumer behavior in terms of consumption and travel intentions. For scale development, expert analysis was used and the statements about the Covid-19 pandemic was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (Table 1). The statements of destination and Covid-19 are based on expert advice (the members of the expert panel are tourism and marketing researchers who work specifically in this field).

The questionnaire was collected between 26.04.2021 and 29.05.2021 shared by the influencers, during which 335 questionnaires were completed. Incomplete questionnaires were withdrawn during data cleaning. After this process, the final

number of questionnaires in the database generated through the influencers' Instagram interface was 329. The subsample contains 185 items, and they are the ones who are willing to travel for gastronomic purposes. The questionnaire was created with an online questionnaire program called Qualtrics and analyzed with SPSS 27 software. During the analysis, descriptive statistics and relationship analysis methods were used. In the association relationship, the Phi and Cramer V indices are authoritative, with an expected minimum level of 0.15 and an expected significance level of 5% for the association. For data reduction, I used principal component analysis (varimax rotation, fixed number of factors) with factor analysis was performed and further analysis I used linear regression analysis too. During the linear regression, I worked with standardized values which I included qualified factors in the analysis.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents analysis of basic and subsample profile, as well as the results along the research questions.

### *Demographic profiles of respondents*

Regarding demographic distributions (Table 2), 70.2% of the respondents are women, 43.2% belong to the age group 26-35, and 62.6% live in the capital, Budapest. 82.6% of influencers' followers have a higher education and 61.4% are employed. 39.8% of the respondents live in a relationship and 34% are married. The net income of 39.2% of the respondents is between HUF 250,001 and HUF 400,000, which is the average income of consumers with higher education in Hungary. Based on these statistics, it can be said that the base of followers of gastronomic influencers is mainly 26-45 year olds, who live in the capital. These data are consistent with other research showing that consumers who are deeply interested in gastronomy have a higher level of education (Kivela & Crofts, 2006).

The demographics of travelers are the same as those of the basic sampling. Based on these, the respondents who are willing to travel for gastronomic purposes typically are 64.9% women, 43.2% belong to the 26-35 age group, 65.9% are residents of Budapest, 83.7% have a high level of education, and 61.1% are employed. 41.6% of them live in a relationship and 40% of their net income is between HUF 250.001- 400,000.

**Table 1. Statements of the questionnaire**

| Influencer   | Statements  |
|--|---|
| Based on Wang 2011, Soliman 2018                                 | I choose a restaurant based on the recommendation of the influencers  |
|  | On the recommendation of the influencers, I visit gastronomic places  |
|  | Based on the recommendations of the influencers, I taste local, typical dishes  |
|  | I regularly gather information from influencers before I go to a restaurant   |
|  | The information you receive from the influencers will make you feel confident when choosing a restaurant                                    |
| Destination  | Statements  |
| Own development based on the recommendations of the expert panel | 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 place/settlement and other attractions, and if I go there, I will check out the offer of the restaurants in the spot |
|  | I don't know the place/settlement, but after consuming in the restaurant I also see the place and the attractions                           |
|  | It is typical for me to travel to try a restaurant  |
|  | The local gastronomic specialties encourage me to revisit the place/town. (I will revisit the places where I ate good)                      |
| Covid-19   | Statements  |
| Own development based on the recommendations of the expert panel | I think I want to consume less /more in a restaurant after the Covid-19 Pandemic  |
|  | The Covid-19 Pandemic does not change /will definitely change my habit of consuming in restaurants  |

Source: Elaborated by the authors

**Table 2. Demographic analysis**

|                    | Basic sampling Travelers |            |            |            | Basic sampling Travelers     |            |            |            |            |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                    | n                        | %          | n          | %          | n                            | %          | n          | %          |            |
| <b>Sex</b>         |                          |            |            |            |                              |            |            |            |            |
| female             | 231                      | 70,2       | 120        | 64,9       | <100.000 Ft                  | 5          | 1,5        | 1          | 0,5        |
| male               | 98                       | 29,8       | 65         | 35,1       | 100.001-250.000 Ft           | 51         | 15,5       | 31         | 16,8       |
| <b>Age</b>         |                          |            |            |            | 250.001-400.000 Ft           | 129        | 39,2       | 74         | 40         |
| 16-25              | 39                       | 11,9       | 23         | 12,4       | 400.001-650.000 Ft           | 78         | 23,7       | 40         | 21,6       |
| 26-35              | 142                      | 43,2       | 80         | 43,2       | >650.001 Ft                  | 58         | 17,6       | 37         | 20         |
| 36-45              | 104                      | 31,6       | 58         | 31,4       | student, supported by parent | 8          | 2,4        | 2          | 1,1        |
| 46-55              | 37                       | 11,2       | 20         | 10,8       | <b>Occupation**</b>          |            |            |            |            |
| >65                | 7                        | 2,1        | 4          | 2,2        | employee                     | 202        | 61,4       | 113        | 61,1       |
| <b>Education*</b>  |                          |            |            |            | contractor                   | 75         | 22,8       | 46         | 24,9       |
| high school        | 43                       | 13,1       | 14         | 7,6        | casual worker                | 8          | 2,4        | 4          | 2,2        |
| skilled labour     | 14                       | 4,3        | 8          | 4,3        | unemployed                   | 8          | 2,4        | 5          | 2,7        |
| college degree     | 129                      | 39,2       | 80         | 43,2       | household                    | 11         | 3,3        | 5          | 2,7        |
| university degree  | 131                      | 39,8       | 75         | 40,5       | student                      | 9          | 2,7        | 2          | 1,1        |
| doctoral degree    | 12                       | 3,6        | 8          | 4,3        | student and part-time        | 10         | 3          | 6          | 3,2        |
| <b>Residence</b>   |                          |            |            |            | student and full-time        | 6          | 1,8        | 4          | 2,2        |
| Budapest – capital | 206                      | 62,6       | 122        | 65,9       | <b>Material status***</b>    |            |            |            |            |
| county seat        | 42                       | 12,8       | 18         | 9,7        | single                       | 78         | 23,7       | 49         | 26,5       |
| other city         | 32                       | 9,7        | 20         | 10,8       | living in a relationship     | 131        | 39,8       | 77         | 41,6       |
| village            | 19                       | 5,8        | 11         | 5,9        | married                      | 112        | 34         | 54         | 29,2       |
| abroad             | 30                       | 9,1        | 14         | 7,6        | divorced                     | 8          | 2,4        | 5          | 2,7        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>329</b>               | <b>100</b> | <b>185</b> | <b>100</b> |                              | <b>329</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>185</b> | <b>100</b> |

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

Source: Elaborated by the authors

**Evaluation of the research questions**

At the beginning of the analysis, the relationship between the effect of influencer and the destination attractiveness was examined. Based on this, there is a positive and significant relationship between the effect of influencers and the destination attractiveness when consumers choose a restaurant on the recommendation of the influencer and typically travel to try a restaurant. As the Phi and Cramer V indices are significant (Sig. <0.05), the strength of the relationship is 0.333 based on Phi and 0.167 according to Cramer V. Furthermore, the relationship between the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the intention to consume in restaurants has been examined. Based on these, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic and consumer consumption intent in restaurants on influencer recommendation, as the Phi and Cramer V indices are significant (Sig. <0.05), the strength of the relationship is 0.330 based on Phi and 0.165 according to Cramer V.

During the analysis of the principal component, the KMO value was always above 0.70 for the qualified factors, the Bartlett's test yielded significant results, the communalities reached the value of 0.25 in all cases, and the factor weights also exceeded the critical value of 0.40. The explained variance ratio was always above 65%. Cronbach's alpha values also exceeded 0.70. Based on the summary in Table 3, it can be said that the relationship between the effect of influencers, the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic and the typically travel to try a restaurant was found to be significant (p<0.01), even this cannot be said for the attitude towards the destination. Examining the value of the standardized coefficient among the factors, we can see that the effect of influencers (0.387) is most closely related to typically travel to try a restaurant, followed by the effect of Covid-19 (0.243). The attitude towards the destination indicates a negative relationship (-0.053), which value was presumably affected by

the lockdown. The F-test is also significant at 0.1%, and the value of the R-square is 43.8%, which is a medium value. The VIF value measuring multicollinearity also reached the lower critical level (1.00), the standard deviation of the residuals is almost 1 (0.992), while its mean was 0, based on these, it can be said that the model fits well.

**What kind of effect do influencer have on the restaurant consumption on gastronomic consumers?**

Examining the basic sample, Figure 1 shows the results of the mean and standard deviation of the respondents, which can be said that 61.2% of the respondents believe that they choose a restaurant by influencers' opinion. 62.9% of the respondents also visit a gastronomic location or settlement based on the opinion of influencers and 62.9% are also willing to taste typical local food seen by influencers. 21.9% of the respondents say they regularly collect information from influencers before going to a restaurant, but 22.8% of the respondents typically visit influencer contents, but could not say for sure that this activity is regular. In contrast, 55.6% of the respondents were confident of the information they received from influencers when choosing a restaurant.

**What kind of effect does the attitude towards the destination attractiveness have on consumers who travel for gastronomic purposes and follow influencers?**

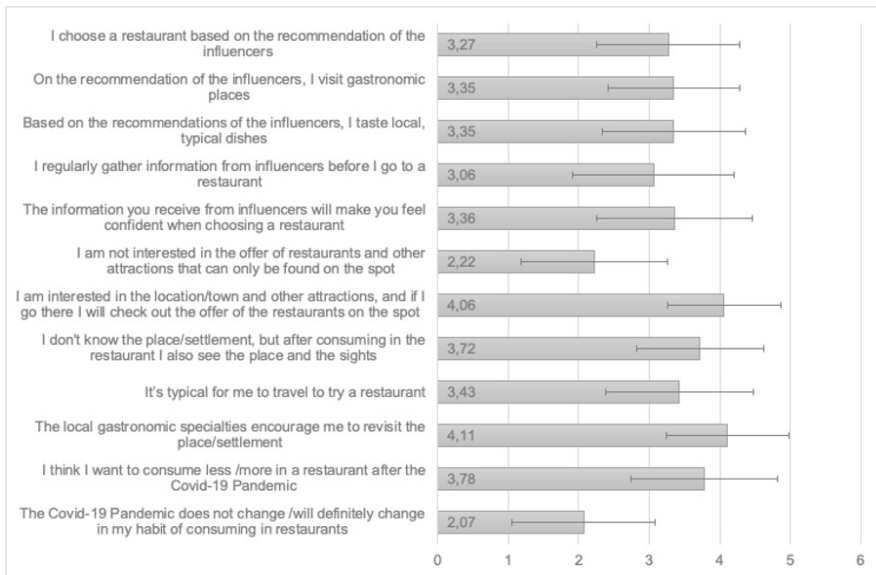
56% of the respondents travel for gastronomic purposes due to influencers, which is 185 person in terms of subsample size. The mean and standard deviation of the sample are illustrated in Figure 2. I examined the destination preference of these respondents, during which it can be said that 12.4%

**Table 3. Values of linear regression**

| Factors     | Standardized coefficient (β) | t-test | p-value |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Influencer  | 0.387                        | 5.512  | <0.001  |
| Covid-19    | 0.243                        | 3.462  | <0.001  |
| Destination | -0.053                       | -0.051 | 0.448   |

Source: Elaborated by the author

**Figure 1. Mean and standard deviation of the respondents (1- not typical at all, 5 - very typical), n=329**



Source: Elaborated by the author

of them say that they are not interested in the settlement and the sights during the trip, they travel to the destination specifically for the offer of the restaurant. In contrast, 66.5% of the respondents stated that when traveling for gastronomic purposes, they also see the place and its attractions after consumption. 79.5% of the respondents are typical that when they travel to a destination, they are also interested in the offer of restaurants. 50.8% of the respondents typically travel to try a particular restaurant and a further 30.3% believe that they are used to traveling for this purpose. It is typical for 76.8% of the respondents to visit the destination again as a result of a positive gastronomic experience. This value is equal to the value of the basic sample, based on which it can be said that the intention to revisit is present among the followers of influencers as well as among the gastronomic consumers who intend to travel, if the local gastronomic specialty provides a positive experience.

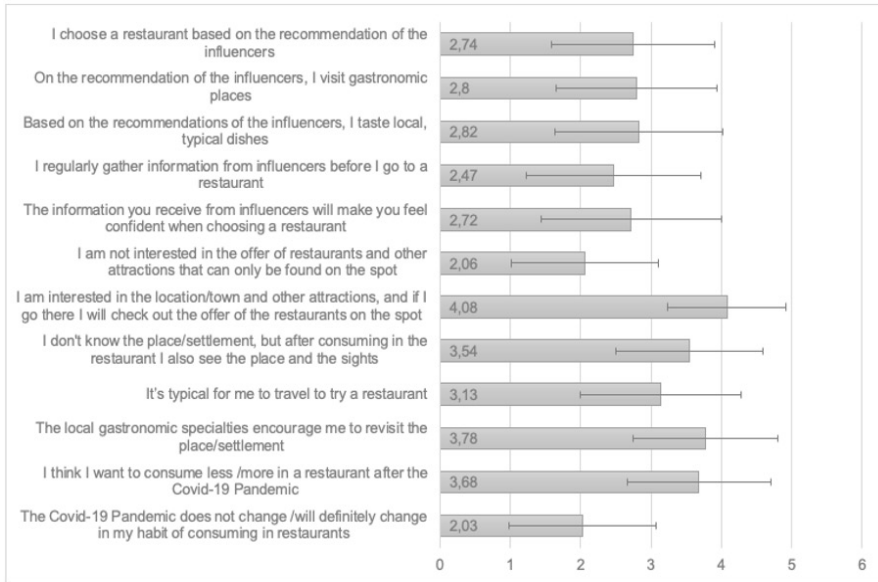
Interestingly, the phenomenon in the subsample is the same as in the basic sample, with 35.7% of respondents collecting information from influencers on a regular basis before going to a restaurant, and a further 31.4% of respondents who typically visit influencers platforms, however, could not state

with certainty that this activity can be said to be regular. However, 50.8% believe that the information received from influencers makes them confident before choosing a restaurant.

***What kind of effect does the appearance of Covid-19 have on restaurant consumption of gastronomic consumers in general and those who travel for gastronomic purposes?***

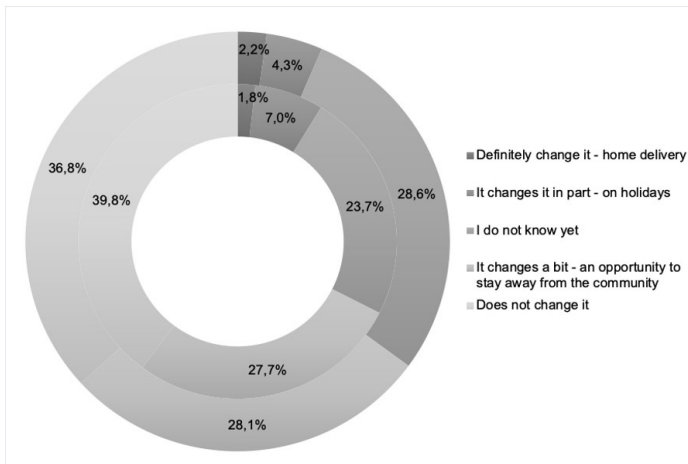
The effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on both the basic sample and the subsample was examined. The mean and standard deviation of the statements are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Examining the results of the whole sample (Figure 3, Figure 4), it can be said that 25.9% of the respondents that their consumption habits in a restaurant do not change, 59.9% believe that they intend to consume more in a restaurant after the Pandemic. Among gastronomic travelers, 25.9% do not intend to change consumption habits in a restaurant, and 64.8% believe that they intend to consume more in a restaurant after the virus than before it shown up.

**Figure 2. Mean and standard deviation of respondents willing to travel for gastronomic purposes (1- not typical at all, 5 - very typical), n=185**



Source: Elaborated by the author

**Figure 3. Consumption habits in restaurants under the influence of Covid-19**



Note: The inner circle is the basic sample (n=329), and the outer circle is the subsample (n=185)

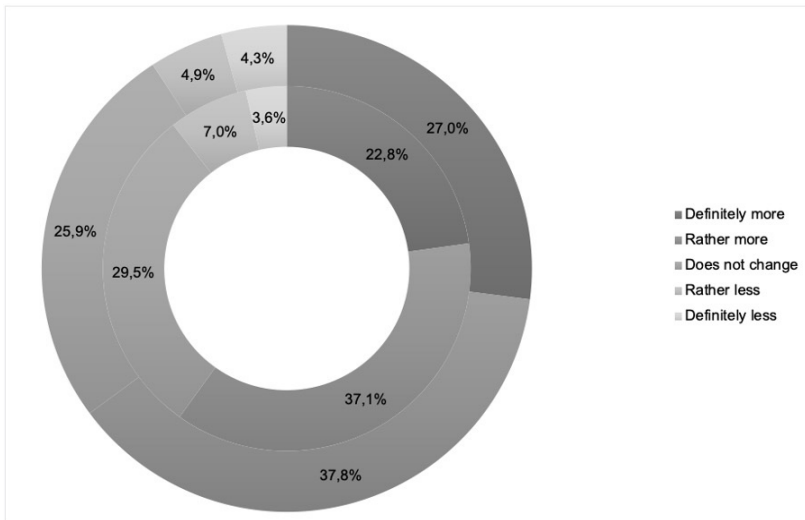
Source: Elaborated by the author



Figure 4 illustrates the consumption habits of respondents in the total sample and subsample for going to a restaurant under the influence of Covid-19. For the basic sample, 39.8% of respondents do not change their habits, 23.7% do not yet know if they change their habits. Of those who are sure to change their consumption habits when going to a restaurant, 27.7% change their habits a bit, try to stay away from the community, 7% believe that they will only consume at a restaurant during the

holidays, and 1.8% will only ask for home delivery in the future. In the case of the subsample, 36.8% of the respondents do not change their habits, and more uncertainty among travelers 28.6% do not yet know whether they will change their habits. In the case of travelers, 28.1% will strive to stay away from the community, only 4.3% intend to go to restaurants on holidays, and 2.2% will switch to home delivery.

**Figure 4. Intent to consume in restaurants under the influence of Covid-19**



Note: The inner circle is the basic sample (n=329), and the outer circle is the subsample (n=185)  
Source: Elaborated by the author

## CONCLUSION

1. What kind of effect does the attitude towards the destination attractiveness have on consumers who travel for gastronomic purposes and follow influencers?

2. What kind of effect does the appearance of Covid-19 have on restaurant consumption of gastronomic consumers in general and those who travel for gastronomic purposes?

In the case of the first research sub-question, it can be said that for the basic sample, influencers have an effect on the choice of gastronomic consumers, as each of the Likert-scale statements reached a value above 3. In the case of the subsample, values slightly below 3 appeared, based on which it can be said that the respondents could not determine their

exact relationship with influencers. There is a dissonance between the answers to statements 4 and 5, as the respondents consider that regular monitoring of influencers in the basic sample and the subsample is not really typical, however, they still believe that influencers' advice will make them confident in their restaurant choice, which confirms Ingrassia et al. (2022) opinion. Further studies of this phenomenon are needed, which would be explored in a qualitative focus group survey.

In the case of the second research sub-question, it can be said that the attitude towards the destination attractiveness has an effect on those consumers who travel for gastronomic purposes and follow influencers. Therefore, it can be said that consumers who travel to a destination for gastronomic purposes see other attractions at the destination. Furthermore, consumers who travel to a given destination

at the suggestion of an influencer are also interested in restaurants offer. So, it can be said that there is a connection between the destination and the restaurants offer of the destination, and they complement each other's attractiveness in the context of investigation of the followers of Instagram influencers. However, the regression analysis indicated a negative relationship, which was probably caused by the lockdown. These results are extremely important findings of the research, as during the review of the literature, I did not find similar research with which the results could be compared. In this regard, to further research, the cultural, sociological, and psychological aspects of consumer attitudes in relation to these two variables should be explored in a qualitative way.

In summary, based on the results, it can be said that the collection of information from influencers before visiting a restaurant is popular among the respondents. This type of information gathering makes the consumer confident in the decision-making process. Thus, the results confirm the statements made in the theoretical part (Hung 2014, Albert et al. 2017, Xu & Pratt 2018, Lee et al. 2021) that the content produced by influencers serve as valuable information for consumers and influence consumers' purchasing intention and decision-making outcome when choosing a restaurant. Furthermore, the research confirms that Chen et al. (2014) state influencers activity has a positive effect on visiting destinations. So, based on the results of the research, it can be said that the majority of consumers are interested in the destination itself when visiting restaurants. Furthermore, the intention to revisit is very strong among consumers who have had a special gastronomic experience.

Based on the third research sub-question, it can be said that Covid-19 amplified the intent to consume in the context of the research and, based on respondents, the majority of consumers do not change their eating habits. Tóth (2020) and Dube

et al. (2021) believed that the Pandemic would have a long-term impact on hospitality habits and be characterized by social distance, this statement partially confirmed by the research. However, it can be said that the intention to consume restaurants has increased in consumers, which is presumably the result of the lockdown that developed during the Pandemic, so it would be important to explore this from a social psychological aspect of consumer attitudes should also be explored in a qualitative way.

The research was not representative, and the provision of which was not feasible in the emergency. The biggest limitation of the research is the sample size itself, which could not be completed due to the appearance of Covid-19. Thus, it was not possible to use the questionnaire at the location of restaurants, so a possible comparative analysis between restaurant consumers and influencer followers was impossible. The results of the research will contribute to understanding restaurant choices for gastronomic consumers following influencers, which will facilitate the work of both tourism and marketing professionals. Furthermore, research and theoretical review contribute to the expansion of the literature on influencers and to an understanding of the relationship between gastronomic intent and destination.

Orsolya Szakály, PhD Student  
orsolya.szakaly@uni-corvinus.hu

Corvinus University of Budapest

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