



Effects on people's purchase intention caused by influencer marketing in the restaurant industry

Trabajo de grado

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Bogotá, Colombia

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With gratitude,

Daniela

August 14, 2023

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Daniela Martínez

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GLOSSARY

B

Brand Awareness: Is a marketing term for the degree to which consumers recognize a product by its name. Ideally, consumers' awareness of the brand may include positive perceptions of the qualities that distinguish the product from its competition.

Investopedia. (n.d). Brand Awareness. In Investopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brandawareness.asp>

C

Consumer Behavior: Is the study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, use (consume), and dispose of products and services, including consumers' emotional, mental, and behavioral responses.

Omniconvert. (n.d). Consumer Behavior. In Omniconvert. Retrieved from <https://www.omniconvert.com/blog/consumer-behavior-in-marketing-patterns-types-segmentation/>

E

Engagement: Refers to the ability of a brand or an influencer to generate engagement with its consumers through persistent and stable relationships.

Arimetrics. (n.d). Engagement. In Arimetrics. Retrieved from <https://www.arimetrics.com/en/digital-glossary/engagement>

F

Foodies: A person who loves food and is very interested in different types of food.

Cambridge University Press. (2023). Foodie. In Cambridge English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/foodie>

I

Influencer: A person who is paid by a company to show and describe its products and services on social media, encouraging other people to buy them.

Cambridge University Press. (2023). Influencer. In Cambridge English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/influencer>

Influencer Marketing: Is a form of marketing that enables businesses to collaborate with individuals who have a significant following to increase brand exposure.

MailChimp. (n.d) Influencer Marketing. In MailChimp. Retrieved from <https://mailchimp.com/es/resources/what-is-influencer-marketing/>

P

Purchase Intention: Is a specific measure or rating of consumers' stated purchase likelihood.

The Universal Marketing Dictionary. (n.d). Purchase Intention. In The Universal Marketing Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://marketing-dictionary.org/p/purchase-intention/>

T

Trustworthiness: The perceived reliability and credibility of an influencer, which affects how followers perceive their recommendations and endorsements.

OpenAI. (2023). Definition of "trustworthiness".

RESUMEN

En un contexto de constante dinamismo y creciente consumismo, el marketing de influencers ha surgido como una fuerza poderosa dentro de la industria restaurantera. Este estudio profundiza en cómo esta estrategia impacta la intención de compra de las personas en Colombia. Examina cómo el marketing de influencers a través de las redes sociales influye en etapas específicas del viaje del consumidor. A través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, esta investigación revela patrones en las preferencias de contenido y la forma en que la autenticidad percibida ejerce su influencia en las intenciones de compra dentro del sector gastronómico. Estas revelaciones contribuyen a una comprensión más profunda de las estrategias de marketing personalizadas en medio del actual panorama empresarial. En resumen, este análisis, basado en una metodología de entrevistas, ilumina el papel crucial asumido por el marketing de influencers en la formación de la intención de compra en el ámbito de los establecimientos gastronómicos colombianos.

Palabras clave: marketing de influencers, intención de compra, autenticidad, gastronomía, comportamiento del consumidor.

ABSTRACT

In a context of constant dynamism and burgeoning consumerism, influencer marketing has emerged as a potent force within the restaurant industry. This study delves into how this strategy impacts people's purchasing intent in Colombia. It examines how influencer marketing via social networks influences specific stages of the consumer journey. Through semi-structured interviews, this investigation unveils patterns in content preferences and the manner by which perceived authenticity wields its influence on purchase intentions within the gastronomy sector. The revelations contribute to a more profound understanding of customized marketing strategies amid the current business landscape. In summation, this analysis, grounded in an interview-based methodology, casts illumination upon the pivotal role assumed by influencer marketing in shaping purchase intent within the realm of Colombian dining establishments.

Keywords: influencer marketing, purchase intent, authenticity, gastronomy, consumer behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH QUESTION

1.1 Context

During the 1920s, it was a prevailing trend for brands to collaborate with prominent figures to craft creative advertisements that could captivate the public's attention, while infusing an element of human connection by tapping into emotions and sensations. Notably, Coca-Cola emerged as a pioneering exponent of this marketing approach, notably selecting Santa Claus as the classic representation of their brand (Pruitt, 2017), a motif that endures even in contemporary times, marking the Christmas season. Subsequently, the landscape witnessed the emergence of cross-industry alliances, with brands forging partnerships with sectors like cinema and music.

This evolution paved the way for collaborations between brands and preeminent musicians, actors, and actresses of the era, culminating in adverts wherein these stars showcased the act of utilizing or consuming the endorsed product. Over time, these individuals were bestowed with the appellation 'brand ambassadors', tasked with presenting the brand's offerings as integral components of their routine, thereby attributing distinct qualities to the product in question. A notable precursor of this phenomenon was exemplified by Marilyn Monroe, who assumed the role of ambassador for the cosmetic brand Luster-Crème during the 1950s, gracing advertisements wherein her endorsement was fervently proclaimed.

Nonetheless, the efficacy and trustworthiness of such advertising campaigns experienced a decline owing to their proliferation (Smith, 2020). Concurrently, the rapid advancements in technology created novel avenues for information acquisition and advertising, wherein the sight for innovation in ad creation became boundless. Social media platforms have not only ushered in a novel mode of interpersonal communication but have also forged a fresh channel linking brands and their clients. This era has also witnessed the emergence of a novel vocation, that of influencers or content creators—everyday individuals who dedicate themselves to unveiling their lives and passions across social media through posts, stories, and videos. With a substantial cohort of followers, these influencers cultivate a community and nurture a rapport with individuals intrigued by the thematic content disseminated through their digital profiles.

This juncture became an enticing prospect for numerous brands to engage potential patrons by leveraging the authenticity inherent in ordinary individuals. Brands thus endeavored to identify influencers whose ethos aligns seamlessly with their own, enabling the organic incorporation of products into the influencer's content, thereby captivating fresh clients. This burgeoning practice, now widely recognized as influencer marketing, has grown into a distinctly popular facet of contemporary marketing strategies (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, & Palmatier, 2022).

As reported by StartUpGrind, influencers wield a remarkable influence over consumers, streamlining the decision-making process for shoppers. Furthermore, research conducted by McKinsey has underscored that bloggers possess the potential to engender nearly twice the sales impact compared to conventional paid advertising strategies. It is noteworthy that a substantial 61% of consumers have been inclined to make purchases predicated on persuasive blog posts (Akhavi, n.d.). Among the most prominent domains embracing the influencer marketing

paradigm are the realms of fashion and cosmetics. Notably, an emerging contender within this landscape is the restaurant industry, wherein a new cadre of influencers, colloquially termed "foodies", are emerging. These individuals specialize in documenting their explorations of diverse culinary offerings and experiential encounters at restaurants, disseminating their gastronomic escapades across social media platforms to a captivated audience. This nascent trend attests to the growing foothold of influencer marketing across multifarious sectors, extending its influence beyond traditional bounds.

In the domain of social media, influencer marketing has risen as a potent promotional strategy, harnessing the expertise of online personalities of influence to transmit brand narratives to their respective audiences through sponsored content. This evolved iteration of endorsement, harking back to the practices of traditional celebrities, has witnessed a striking rise due to the exponential proliferation of digital platforms.

This transformative shift finds its roots in the contemporary consumer inclination to anchor their purchase choices upon the viewpoints and experiences of individuals who bear resemblances to themselves, a departure from the erstwhile reliance on endorsements from remote celebrities. In this dynamic landscape, the role of social media emerges as pivotal, empowering influencers with considerable authority to mold the purchasing deliberations of their followers.

1.2 Justification of the study

The restaurant sector is presently undergoing a period of exponential growth, witnessed both in Colombia and across the globe. Dining establishments are allocating substantial resources and investments towards not only delivering exceptional cuisine but also crafting immersive dining experiences (Crowe). In pursuit of this endeavor, the industry is harnessing the potential of influencers to access a meticulously segmented audience—individuals who exhibit a keen interest in culinary delights and gastronomic experiences within specific locales.

Within the contemporary digital environment, influencer marketing has ascended to a position of heightened prominence. Operative through the conduit of social media, influencers wield a remarkable capacity to reach expansive audiences, thereby wielding considerable influence over consumer perceptions spanning diverse products and services. For the Colombian restaurant domain, influencer marketing assumes a role of greatest importance, serving as a formidable instrument to augment visibility, amplify the reputation of dining establishments, and ultimately catalyze consumers' intent to partake in their offerings.

Here are some arguments that support the relevance of researching this topic and the importance of analyzing influencer marketing in the restaurant industry in Colombia:

- Growth of Social Media in Colombia: The social media platforms with the greatest reach in Colombia in 2022 were: Facebook leading the sector, with 64.5 percent of the total population; in second place is YouTube, with 59.1 percent; in third place is TikTok, with

51.1 percent; Messenger in fourth, with 39.4 percent; and Instagram in fifth, with 34.2 percent (Cano Lopera, 2023).

Colombia is a country where internet access and social media usage have experienced significant growth in recent years. This has led to a shift in consumer behavior, with more people turning to social media to seek recommendations, opinions, and experiences about restaurants before making purchase decisions.

- **Influence of Influencers on Decision-Making:** According to the Journal of Business Research, consumers use content on social media as sources of inspiration, and as a result, these platforms can easily influence their purchasing behavior. The appealing and persuasive content posted by influencers and brands can spark interest, create desires, and ultimately lead to purchasing actions.

Influencers, through their online platforms, have established emotional connections with their followers and enjoy high credibility. Their recommendations and opinions can directly influence the purchasing decisions of their followers, especially when it comes to restaurant experiences, where personal ratings and recommendations from other users are particularly relevant.

- **Measuring Return on Investment (ROI):** Despite the growth of influencer marketing, measuring the ROI of these strategies remains a challenge. In the context of the restaurant industry, it is essential to analyze whether investments in influencer marketing campaigns have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions and, ultimately, on restaurant sales.

Studies conducted in Colombia by the marketing agency Goldfish have shown that the return on investment for influencer marketing is around six times the initial expenditure.

In other words, for every dollar an advertiser invests in influencer marketing, they receive 6 dollars in return.

- **Cultural and Regional Perspective:** Colombia boasts a rich cultural and gastronomic diversity that varies across different regions of the country. It is interesting to examine how influencer marketing can adapt to these regional particularities and how it influences people's purchase intentions in each geographical area.
- **Growing Environmental Concerns:** With increasing awareness of environmental issues and sustainability, consumers are becoming more conscious of their choices, including where and what they eat. The restaurant industry, being a significant consumer of resources and a contributor to waste generation, is under scrutiny regarding its environmental practices. Understanding how influencer marketing influences consumers' decisions can shed light on how it might impact sustainable practices in the restaurant sector.

The results of this research can provide valuable insights for restaurant owners and managers, as well as marketing professionals, and contribute to the knowledge of effectively using influencer marketing in the Colombian context.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the digital age, influencer marketing has risen as a key strategy for promoting products and services, leveraging the power of social media. In fact, the influencer marketing sector is projected to expand and reach approximately \$21.1 billion by 2023 (Geysler, 2023).

Particularly in the Colombian gastronomic industry, this trend has gained remarkable traction. Notably, consumers in Colombia are increasingly valuing recommendations from influencers as a factor in their dining choices. Interestingly, despite diligent inquiries to authoritative sources such as the Department of National Statistics (DANE), the National Tax and Customs Directorate (DIAN), the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism (MinCIT), and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MinTIC), no specific statistics on this topic exist in the country. As the landscape of consumer-brand interaction evolves rapidly due to technological advancements, there exists a compelling exigency to comprehensively comprehend the extent of influencer marketing's impact on shaping consumers' purchasing intentions within Colombia's dynamic culinary sector.

1.4 Research Question

In-depth, there are no studies on how influencer marketing in the restaurant industry affects people's decision-making process. Therefore, this paper focuses on investigating how

influencer marketing affects people's purchase intention for the restaurant industry in Colombia.

To achieve this, the following specific research questions will be addressed:

RQ1: How does influencer marketing on social media impact people's awareness of restaurants in the Colombian market?

RQ2: How do different types of influencer content (e.g., food reviews, dining experiences, culinary tips, storytelling) impact consumers' purchase intention in the restaurant industry in Colombia?

RQ3: What role does perceived authenticity of influencers play in influencing purchase intention through social media influencer marketing in Colombia's restaurant industry?

By addressing these specific research questions, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior in the restaurant industry.

This investigation will shed light on the effectiveness and potential impact of this marketing strategy within the Colombian context. The subsequent sections of this thesis are organized as follows: Chapter II delves into the relevant literature review, exploring key theories and concepts related to influencer marketing and consumer behavior. Chapter III outlines the chosen methodology for this research, elucidating the steps taken to collect and analyze data. Chapter IV presents the analysis and results derived from the collected data, offering a comprehensive view of the findings. Moving forward, Chapter V draws conclusions from the study's results and provides practical recommendations. Chapter VI acknowledges the limitations of the study and suggests potential avenues for future research. This structured approach aims to

provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between influencer marketing and purchase intention, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge in both academia and industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the current landscape, propelled by technological advancements and the burgeoning populace of internet users, the acquisition and dissemination of information on virtually any subject have become feasible. Evidently, the statistics from January 2023 underscore this trend, revealing the staggering presence of 2.958 billion active users on Facebook, 2.514 billion on YouTube, 2 billion on Instagram, and 1.051 billion on TikTok (Fernández, 2023).

Aligned with this trajectory, when confronted with the prospect of a purchase, whether it involves embarking on a journey to a new destination or exploring an uncharted culinary establishment, individuals harbor a proclivity to glean comprehensive information pertinent to the product or service they contemplate acquiring.

In the present milieu, the quest for information transcends the confines of conventional search engines. Social media platforms (Doe, 2019), including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and, more contemporarily, TikTok, have emerged as indispensable channels for information procurement. Compellingly, research substantiates that these social networks not only serve as dynamic information repositories but are also perceived by users as a dependable and frequently updated resource.

Among the vast multitude of social media users, a subset comprises influencers who curate content revolving around specific themes or their daily lives. Collaborating with brands that sponsor them, influencers engage in the review and exposition of products or services aligned with their content themes, resonating with their audiences' interests. This phenomenon, recognized as influencer marketing, involves a symbiotic relationship between an online influencer and a brand, with the former endorsing the latter's offerings to their followers (Geyser, Influencer MarketingHub, 2023).

Moreover, the hospitality sector has attested to the considerable impact of influencer marketing. Notably, when executed judiciously, it has demonstrated the potential to augment lead generation, leveraging the synergistic harmony between the right content and the appropriate influencer (Falter, 2021).

Within this expansive framework, influencers who have cultivated dedicated social media accounts exclusively dedicated to documenting their gastronomic exploits within restaurants are colloquially termed "foodies". These individuals are extended invitations by restaurant management to partake in the culinary experience and subsequently disseminate their firsthand encounters through visual posts—comprising images or videos—alongside textual descriptions.

This practice has evolved into an increasingly prevalent and efficacious communication strategy adopted by restaurants worldwide (R, 2020).

This comprehensive review paper undertakes a nuanced exploration of pivotal facets underpinning the influence of influencer marketing on the purchase intentions of patrons within the restaurant industry. The thematic contours encompass the elucidation of influencer marketing, delineation of purchase intention, analysis of influencer marketing's ramifications on purchase intention, examination of influencer marketing's role within the hospitality sector, and the phenomenon of "foodies".

2.2 Definition of influencer marketing

The Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science has presented a comprehensive portrayal of online influencers, denoting them as individuals, collectives, or even virtual avatars who have cultivated a network of followers within social media platforms. Such figures are perceived as opinion leaders in the digital realm, wielding notable social influence over their audience. Online influencers, employing media such as videos, photos, and textual content, share glimpses of their presumed daily lives predominantly through platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which are fertile grounds for this genre of content.

Álvarez, in his study, elucidates influencer marketing as a strategic approach that endeavors to harness the persuasive authority of key individuals through collaboration with social media influencers. These influencers wield the power to impact or sway their network, either by enhancing brand awareness or eliciting an increased intention to purchase. Scholars

have classified influencers based on their content platforms or content types, encompassing categories like bloggers, YouTubers, Instagrammers, and celebrities. Furthermore, classification by follower count is common practice, although it is important to note that follower count alone does not serve as a definitive measure of persuasive potency. Remarkably, micro-influencers, often with around 100,000 followers, have demonstrated the highest level of influence over their audience. Following the selection process, companies typically remunerate influencers on a per-post or per-view basis (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, & Palmatier, 2022).

Concurrently, other researchers characterize influencer marketing as a communication strategy that revolves around the identification and encouragement of online influencers to engage with their followers on social media, thereby serving as conduits for disseminating information about a company's offerings (Gu, Palmatier, & Leung, 2022).

Irfan Ahmad introduces a novel perspective to influencer marketing, wherein companies promote products or services by leveraging the preferences of individuals who exhibit proclivities for products that have been embraced by others. This paradigm underscores the cascading influence that stems from aligning product promotion with existing consumer behaviors.

Building upon the elucidations provided in the preceding definitions, influencer marketing emerges as a brand strategy predicated on forging alliances with authoritative online figures renowned for their substantial social media followings. These influencers cater their content to audiences drawn to themes akin to their own creative pursuits. Central to this marketing approach is the aspiration to harness the credibility and extensive outreach commanded by influencers, thereby catalyzing favorable sentiments and actions among their followers in relation to the endorsed product or service. By synergizing with influencers whose

passions align harmoniously with the preferences of the brand's intended audience, companies can effectively tap into a receptive and fervently engaged customer segment. This symbiotic partnership engenders a cascading effect, culminating in heightened brand visibility and the potential for substantial business expansion.

2.2.1 Types of influencer marketing

As outlined by García, López, and Martínez (2022), a prominent strategy in influencer marketing is "Content Collaboration." This creative partnership fosters synergy between the brand and the influencer, leading to the co-creation of original content aligned with the brand's ethos. The resulting content not only deepens the partnership but also cultivates a coherent narrative that resonates with the audience, amplifying engagement and brand affinity.

The "Influencer Reviews" strategy holds significance, encompassing influencer evaluation and commentary on the brand's offerings. This form of marketing delivers followers with credible and practical insights into the products, effectively influencing their purchasing decisions while reinforcing faith in the brand (García et al., 2022). In essence, the array of approaches available in influencer marketing empowers brands to creatively tailor their strategies, harmonizing with their objectives and fluidly adapting to the ever-evolving digital preferences and behaviors of consumers.

2.3 Definition of consumer behavior

The meticulous exploration of consumer behavior stands as an essential pillar within the realm of marketing, enclosing a multifaceted spectrum of activities and mechanisms involving both individuals and collectives. These endeavors fringe the comprehensive array of interactions surrounding the selection, acquisition, utilization, and eventual disposal of products, services, ideas, or experiences—all aimed at the satiation of their intrinsic needs and desires (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015; Salomon, 2017).

The literature highlights the diverse range of interests that individuals foster across a wide spectrum of products. This diversified fervor necessitates an intricate understanding of consumer behavior to proficiently cater to the myriad preferences that animate the marketplace.

Consumers manifest in a multitude of forms, encompassing individuals, organizations, and communal aggregates (Salomon, 2017). It is pertinent to acknowledge the complexity of this process, often involving distinct individuals assuming varying roles within the consumption narrative.

According to the elucidation provided by Professor Lars Perner, the consumer decision-making process encompasses a series of discernible stages. This progression commences with the identification of a predicament, borne out of the perception of a discrepancy within a given context. Subsequently, the process advances to the phase of information retrieval, wherein potential resolutions are sought. Subsequent to this, the evaluation of alternatives takes precedence, entailing a comprehensive assessment of the advantages and disadvantages inherent

in each option. Key parameters such as economic considerations, feasibility, appropriateness, and anticipated gains assume significance during this pivotal juncture. The ultimate culmination of this process materializes in the form of the acquisition of the chosen course of action. This culmination is then succeeded by a subsequent evaluation phase, during which the extent of alignment between the acquired product and the initially set expectations is meticulously examined.

In practice, individuals often navigate through these stages in a manner characterized by iteration. Notably, within the evaluation phase, consumers may revisit previously considered alternatives, thereby introducing a cyclic aspect that underscores the intricate and dynamic nature inherent to this decision-making process.

2.4 Definition of customer journey

The process that a consumer follows from the moment a need or desire is recognized until a purchase is made and beyond, including their interaction with a brand before, during, and after the purchase, has been defined by influential marketing authors.

In view of the changing landscape shaped by technology, significant transformation has been undergone by the consumer journey. As the exploration of this journey is delved into, insights from Kotler's 2016 book "Marketing Management" are turned to. This model has been chosen for its apt incorporation of the role of technology within the consumer journey, offering a comprehensive perspective on how interactions with brands are navigated and purchasing

decisions are made by individuals. Certainly, an exploration of the four distinct stages delineated by Kotler is warranted:

Considered Stage: During this stage, options within the individual's "evoked set," encompassing products or services that are top of mind, are contemplated.

Evaluated Stage: In this phase, the various options gathered in the previous stage are carefully examined. Incorporation of new options or elimination of some is based on information collected both online and offline, while aligning with selection criteria.

Purchasing Stage: Progressing to the buying stage, the purchase is made either online or offline, formally transitioning into becoming a customer.

Engage-Advocate-Bond Stage: This phase represents a post-purchase deep connection where the buyer can either become an advocate for the brand, sharing their positive experiences, or express dissatisfaction based on their own experiences.

The incorporation of technology into this journey has reconfigured the way in which individuals engage with brands, shaping their decisions at each stage. The process underscores the necessity for businesses not only to ensure a seamless path to purchase but also to deliver exceptional experiences that lead to customer advocacy and lasting bonds.

2.4.1 Definition of purchase intention

According to Phelps and Hoy, purchase intent or purchase intention is the measure of the likelihood that an individual will engage in purchasing a product. This propensity is notably

shaped by the emotions and thoughts evoked through the brand's advertising initiatives (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 1999). However, a deeper exploration into this concept has yielded a more nuanced perspective. Purchase intention has subsequently been delineated as the factors that initiate and propel the act of purchasing products or services (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010), subsequently culminating in actual purchasing behavior (de Magistris & Gracia, 2008). Mirabi and Akbariyeh further contribute by establishing a linkage between purchase intention, consumer behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes.

Drawing from the combination of these definitions, purchase intent can be defined as the precise juncture when a consumer endeavors to procure a product or service through a transaction, prompted by the stimulus provided by advertising materials. Furthermore, empirical evidence attests to the correlation between an elevation in purchase intent and an increased likelihood of actual purchase. In essence, a positive purchase intent aligns with affirmative engagement, effectively nurturing the inclination for making a purchase (Martins, Costa, Oliveira, Gonçalves, & Branco, 2019).

2.4.2 Factors influencing purchase intention

Within the realm of factors influencing purchase intention, Michael R. Solomon's observations from "Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being" emphasize the significant role of social dynamics, particularly through reference groups and social norms. Reference groups hold a special place in this context, as they encompass various individuals and entities with whom an individual identifies and seeks validation or direction. These groups can range

from close friends and family to colleagues, celebrities, and even public figures such as social media influencers.

In the contemporary digital era, characterized by the substantial impact of social media, notable individuals such as influencers possess the ability to mold consumer actions. Their endorsements and personal inclinations can profoundly affect the choices made by their audience. As consumers relate to these individuals and place importance on their viewpoints, their endorsements hold the capacity to alter perspectives on offerings, ultimately impacting the inclination to buy. The influence of reference groups, encompassing influential public figures, underscores the complex interaction between social affiliations and consumer choices, highlighting the vital significance of social elements in shaping the path consumers take.

2.5 Influencer marketing effect on purchase intention

Influencer marketing is a strategy with profound impact on the followers of public figures, owing to the established influencer-follower relationship fostered through the influencer's authentic and visually appealing content (Argyris, Muqaddam, & Miller, 2021). Li and Peng posit that influencers forge intimacy with their followers by sincerely sharing personal experiences, preferences, and engaging frequently with their audience. Substantiated by prior research, this form of marketing has been proven to wield greater efficacy than conventional celebrity endorsements in terms of swaying the intended audience (Colliander & Mohr, 2011).

In the realm of social media influencers, studies affirm that contentment with influencers' image corresponds directly to the target consumer's positive assessment of social presence,

interpersonal connections, and the degree of enjoyment derived (Dabholkar, van Dolen, & de Ruyter, 2009). Moreover, the credibility, entertainment value, and informativeness inherent in an advertisement significantly contribute to the consumer's perception of its worth, thereby influencing their purchase intention (Van-Tien Dao, Nhat-Hanh Le, Ming-Sung Cheng, & Chao Chen, 2014). A study conducted by Yu and Park further substantiates the affirmative influence of influencer marketing on consumers' attitudes towards restaurants and their inclination to visit such establishments.

2.6 Influencer marketing in the hospitality industry

The escalating prevalence of social media platforms and their user base has introduced a pronounced challenge for public relations practitioners within the hospitality sector. Seasoned industry observers contend that a seamless integration of communication becomes imperative to ensure the accurate dissemination of messages to the intended audience. Concurrently, empirical research affirms that ordinary individuals increasingly gravitate towards Instagrammers and other social media influencers as sources of publicity. This trend is rooted in the perception of influencers as relatable figures, instilling a higher degree of trust as information sources compared to conventional media outlets. In parallel, the social media landscape presents a dual-faced dynamic, characterized by both opportunities and hurdles. On one hand, the algorithmic framework of social platforms facilitates precision targeting, affording brands direct engagement with their audience and fostering interactions. Furthermore, this medium proves to be cost-efficient (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Seyhmus, 2017). Equally significant is the potential

accorded to smaller enterprises, as influencer marketing paves the way for heightened visibility, customer expansion, and revenue generation—a particularly positive trend within the industry, offering the prospect of market distinction even among corporate giants.

Agha underscores the pivotal role influencers occupy as contemporary reviewers, conveying authentic real-life experiences through their content. This personalized approach not only establishes a tangible connection with potential customers but also cultivates enduring relationships, firmly rooted in trust and support. The Hotel Marketing Association underscores the potency of visual-centric social platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which harness the human brain's rapid processing of images—60,000 times faster than text. Their assertion further accentuates the appeal of influencer-generated content, which infuses a sense of amusement and provides a genuine and distinctive perspective on experiences, in contrast to content crafted by corporations.

A pivotal instance that underscored the intersection of influencer marketing and the restaurant industry was the collaborative effort between KFC, Beyond Meat, and renowned TikTokker and YouTuber Liza Koshy, resulting in the launch of the "Beyond Fried Chicken" product (Springer).

In summation, influencer marketing emerges as a potent stratagem for restaurants to augment their consumer purchase intention. By engaging with influencers who authentically resonate with their audience, eateries can enhance the perceived quality of their offerings and subsequently stimulate sales. Nonetheless, it is imperative for restaurants to diligently research potential influencers and meticulously select partnerships to ensure an unfeigned and trustworthy message resonates with consumers.

2.7 Foodies

To date, empirical investigations into the realm of foodies and their interconnectedness with social media marketing and subsequent impacts on restaurant performance remain conspicuously absent. The nomenclature "foodies" is a relatively recent coinage, with its earliest appearance documented in *New York* magazine in 1980. Four years later, it assumed its connotation as a collective denoting individuals fervently dedicated to the realms of gastronomy and travel, with an intrinsic focus on culinary exploration (Chang, Morrison, Hsin-Hung Lin, & Ho, 2020).

However, in contemporary context, the mantle of "foodies" has been assumed by a cadre of social media influencers who craft content centered around restaurant reviews, gastronomy, and culinary recipes. Notably, the content curated by foodies is characterized by its authenticity and the presentation of visually captivating high-quality images that are aptly designed to tantalize the taste buds of their audience.

As elucidated by the Flaminjoy blog, influencer marketing within the restaurant industry attains commendable success due to its innate ability to captivate attention, skillfully stimulating both the visual and gustatory senses through captivating imagery. Furthermore, this tool finds widespread application across restaurants of varying scales, serving as an effective conduit to reach a broader audience seeking to engage with gastronomical content (Day, 2022).

In an overarching perspective, foodies have assumed a palpable prominence within the restaurant industry's fabric. A notable consequence of their ascendancy is the pivotal role they

play in guiding their followers' dining decisions through their recommendations. While reservations concerning the potential impact of foodies on the industry persist, research posits that their influence on consumer purchase intention bears marked significance, particularly when they are perceived as trustworthy authorities endowed with a profound knowledge of the intricacies of the restaurant landscape.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological approach

A qualitative study was conducted due to the intricate and multifaceted nature of influencer marketing, which required a thorough comprehension of its implications for individuals' purchase intentions. This approach facilitated an exhaustive exploration of the perceptions, attitudes, and intricacies that delineate interactions between influencers and consumers in the Colombian food industry. Given the complex interplay of factors such as perceived authenticity, content relevance, and emotional resonance, a qualitative analysis emerged as the most suitable avenue for capturing the intricate dynamics of these elements and their consequential impact on purchase decisions. The essential role of qualitative

methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, in revealing unanticipated insights was crucial within the dynamic landscape of influencer marketing. By delving into socio-cultural and emotional dimensions, alongside the underlying motivations of consumers, this approach conferred a comprehensive and contextualized perspective. Consequently, it enriched academic research in this sphere by contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of influencer marketing on purchase intentions, particularly in a burgeoning segment that had been underexplored up until that point.

3.2 Population and Sampling

In the context of this study, it was crucial to address both the broader population in order to achieve a comprehensive and insightful understanding. The target population encompassed a diverse range of individuals, spanning various ages, genders, socioeconomic levels, and geographical locations across Colombia. To capture this diversity, a sample of 25 participants was meticulously selected.

To ensure a rigorous and well-planned selection process of these 25 participants, a purposive sampling methodology was employed. This deliberate approach allowed the identification and curation of individuals who followed one or more food influencers based in Colombia on social media platforms and interacted with them through likes or comments.

The adoption of this methodology was driven not only by the aim to capture a wide range of perspectives but also by the aspiration to explore the impact of influencer content on consumer purchasing behavior. Through a thorough exploration of the diverse experiences and

perceptions of the participants, the study aimed to uncover the mechanisms by which the online presence of these influencers influences consumer inclinations and establishes emotional connections with the promoted products and services in question.

In summary, this study was conceived as a pathway to unravel the intricate relationship between food influencers and their audience in Colombia. The carefully selected group of 25 participants, chosen through purposive sampling, serves as evidence of the commitment to encompass the range of perspectives present in the target population. The convergence of thoughtful participant selection and sample size was poised to facilitate a perceptive and nuanced comprehension of the transformative impact of these interactions on purchasing behavior and the overall perception of products and services in the rapidly evolving digital and culinary landscape.

3.2.1 Population

This study focuses on individuals located in Colombia who actively engage in the digital gastronomic market as consumers and are susceptible to the influence of influencer marketing when making food and restaurant-related purchasing decisions. This population comprises various profiles, including different age groups, genders, geographical locations, and socioeconomic levels. The diversity within this population promises a comprehensive and enriching analysis, as each segment may respond distinctively to marketing strategies.

3.2.1.1 Inclusion Criteria

Participants chosen to form the sample need to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Reside within Colombia.
- Demonstrate familiarity with social media platforms.
- Engage with content creators on social media who focus on food-related topics.

3.2.2 Sampling

To ensure both representation and a diverse range of perspectives, an intentional sampling approach was employed. Participants meeting the inclusion criteria were meticulously chosen, with the goal of achieving variation in age, gender, and geographical location.

A total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted, involving participants who contributed a wide array of diverse information regarding their encounters with influencer marketing and its impacts on purchasing decisions within the gastronomic industry.

Prior to initiating any research activities, informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were furnished with comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, the confidentiality of their responses, and the utilization of the collected data.

3.3 Data collection method

In this qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data-gathering tool. These interviews offered a valuable platform to explore participants' experiences and viewpoints in a comprehensive and in-depth manner. Prior to the interview phase, a meticulously designed guide of open-ended questions was prepared to guide the conversations and facilitate the spontaneous expression of opinions by the participants. Likewise, a set of possible answers was planned to guide the interviewee in case of confusion and to reduce subjectivity and facilitate the processing of responses.

The question guide was formulated through a meticulous review of the literature and a consideration of the research objectives. The interviews encompassed general inquiries pertaining to participants' demographics, thus contextualizing their responses and tracking trends. The questions were tailored to address vital themes concerning the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention within the Colombian culinary industry.

Demographic questions:

- Age
- Gender:
 - Female
 - Male
 - I would rather not to answer
- City

- How often do you use social media to engage with content created by influencers?
- Through which social media do you consume content created by Foodies?

After obtaining basic demographic information, the open-ended questions related to the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention could include:

- How do you usually find out about food influencers on social media?
- Have you visited restaurants that you discovered through content from social media influencers? If yes, how many times?
- In case you have visited a restaurant motivated by an influencer's review, how would you rate your experiences in general?
- Do you consider that influencer content on social media increases your awareness of the variety of restaurants available in Colombia?
- Which format of content related to restaurants do you find most interesting?
- What kind of content do you like the most? (e.g., food reviews, dining experiences, culinary tips, storytelling.)
- What factors contribute to your trust in influencer recommendations compared to other sources of information?
- Describe a situation in which you changed your mind about a restaurant or food product due to interaction with an influencer. Why did that change occur?
- Do you believe that influencers' content authentically reflects their opinions about restaurants and/or food products, or do you perceive some degree of outside influence in their recommendations?

The question guide will be used as a flexible foundation during the interviews, allowing participants to share their personal experiences and detailed viewpoints. This semi-structured approach will enable a deep and meaningful exploration of the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention in the Colombian culinary industry from the consumers' perspective, while also contextualizing their responses within their demographics.

3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis process began with the meticulous transcription of the interviews, capturing every detail and subtlety of participants' responses. Subsequently, the identification of emerging patterns was undertaken and grouped into various categories to attain a deeper understanding of the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention within the Colombian culinary industry.

The initial categories focused on participant profiles, encompassing demographic aspects such as age, gender and city. Another set of categories delved into foodies' content consumption behavior, exploring the frequency of exposure to such content, preferred social media platforms for viewing, and methods employed to discover online foodies.

The influence on purchase decisions emerged as a central category, investigating whether foodies' recommendations led to restaurant visits and the frequency of such visits. In tandem with this, the overall experience at visited restaurants was also probed to gain a more comprehensive grasp of the outcomes of these decisions.

An additional category centered on the expansion of gastronomic knowledge through foodies' social media content and whether this content contributed to a heightened understanding of the diverse culinary options in Colombia.

Individual preferences and the factors influencing trust in foodies' recommendations constituted another pivotal category, while changes in opinion due to foodies' opinions and the reasons behind such shifts were examined in detail.

Lastly, the authenticity and credibility of foodies' content were explored, scrutinizing whether participants' perceptions regarding the authenticity of foodies' opinions were influenced by external factors.

This categorical framework furnished a robust structure for analyzing and comprehending the intricate interactions between influencer marketing and purchase intention within the realm of the Colombian culinary industry.

3.4.1 Coding and Categorization

In this section, the process of coding and categorization undertaken to analyze the collected interview data is elaborated in detail.

The coding process involved the systematic identification and labeling of relevant segments in the interview transcriptions. Each segment was tagged with descriptive codes corresponding to specific categories. The application of this process to the identified categories is outlined below:

- **Participant Profile: Age, Gender, City**

Segments of transcriptions containing information about participants' age, gender, and city were identified. The codes "Age," "Gender," and "City" were respectively applied to these segments, enabling demographic grouping and analysis of responses.

- **Consumption of Foodies' Content: Frequency, Social Media Platforms, Methods of Discovery**

Segments related to the frequency of consuming foodies' content, the social media platforms used for such consumption, and the methods employed to discover foodies on social media were identified and tagged with the codes "Frequency," "Social Media Platforms," and "Discovery Methods," respectively.

- **Influence on Purchase Decision: Restaurant Visits, Frequency, Experience**

Text segments mentioning restaurant visits prompted by foodies' reviews, the frequency of these influencer-driven visits, and the overall experiences at visited restaurants were coded with the labels "Restaurant Visits," "Frequency," and "Experience."

- **Enrichment of Gastronomic Knowledge: Perception of Enhancement**

Segments expressing whether foodies' content enriched awareness of restaurant diversity in Colombia were labeled with the code "Perception of Enhancement."

- **Preferences and Trust Factors: Gastronomic Content, Trust Contributors**

Responses mentioning the most captivating type of gastronomic content and factors contributing to trust in foodies' recommendations were coded with "Gastronomic Content" and "Trust Contributors."

- **Opinion Changes and Perspectives: Changes, Reasons**

Segments discussing changes in opinions about restaurants or products due to foodies and the reasons behind these changes were tagged with "Changes" and "Reasons."

- **Authenticity and Credibility: Perception of Authenticity**

Segments discussing perceptions of whether foodies' content authentically reflected their opinions or was externally influenced were coded with "Perception of Authenticity."

This coding process facilitated the systematic organization of data into relevant categories, aiding in the identification of patterns and emerging themes in subsequent analysis.

4. ANALYSIS & RESULTS

4.1 Presentation of collected data

In this section, the collected information is presented in detail through interviews focusing on analyzing the effects of influencer marketing on purchase intention within the Colombian gastronomic industry. The information gathered from the interviews has been carefully processed and organized into meaningful categories and codes, allowing for a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences.

The presentation of findings has been structured in a coherent manner with the adopted methodological approach, respecting the categories and codes that emerged during the process of coding and categorization. This will facilitate a clear visualization of emerging patterns and trends identified in participants' responses.

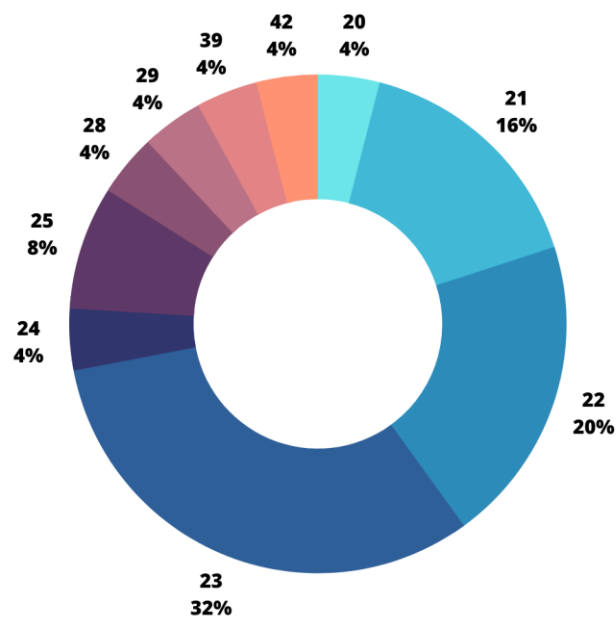
Throughout this section, valuable and representative responses provided by participants will be selectively quoted, aiming to enhance the understanding of the effects of influencer marketing on purchase intention in the context of the Colombian gastronomic industry. These quotes will highlight viewpoints and experiences that significantly contributed to the overall comprehension of the topic.

4.1.1 Participant Profile: Age, Gender, City

- Age

The age category provides insight into the varied generational perspectives on influencer marketing's influence on purchase intent in the Colombian gastronomic industry. Participants aged 20 to 42 were interviewed, with a notable concentration around 23 years.

Figure 4.1. *Age Distribution of Participants.*



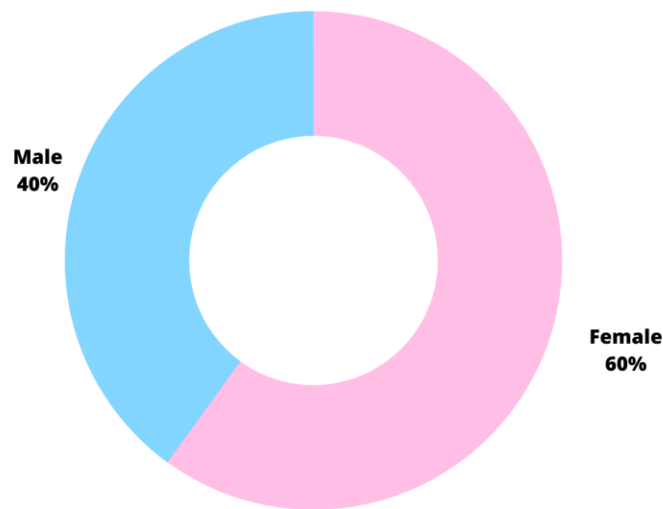
Martinez, D. (2023). Age Distribution of Participants. [Pie Chart].

- Gender

The participants comprised 15 females and 10 males, ensuring diverse viewpoints in exploring the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention in the Colombian food sector.

Figure 4.2.

Gender Distribution of Participants.



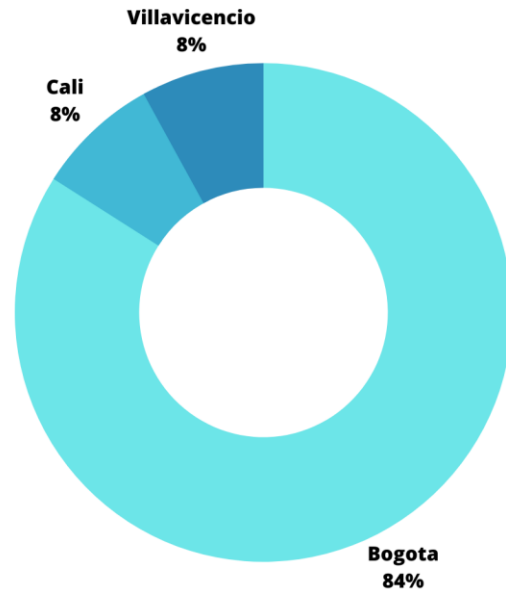
Martinez, D. (2023). Gender Distribution of Participants. [Pie Chart].

- City

The study engaged participants from three major cities in Colombia, predominantly from Bogotá. This city-based diversity allows for insights into the effects of influencer marketing on purchase intention across different urban contexts.

Figure 4.3.

Geographical Distribution of Participants by City.



Martinez, D. (2023). Geographical Distribution of Participants by city. [Pie Chart].

4.1.2 Consumption of Foodies' Content: Frequency, Social Media Platforms, Methods of Discovery

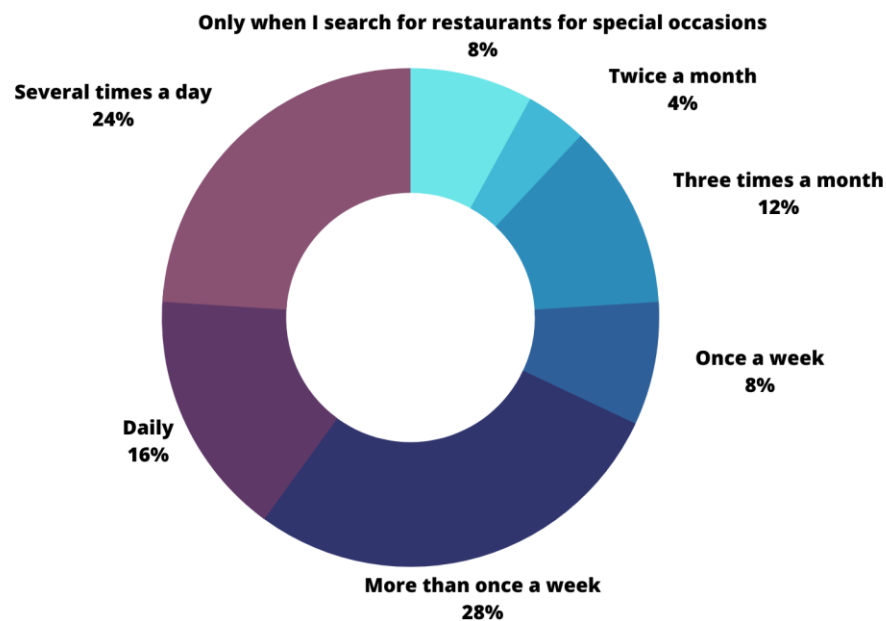
- Frequency

The upcoming pie chart provides an insightful overview of the frequency at which participants engage with content generated by food influencers. Through meticulous transcription and analysis of the interview responses, patterns emerged to shed light on the diverse consumption habits. This chart visually encapsulates the variations in consumption frequency, with 28% of respondents indicating a heightened engagement, favorably interacting

with such content more than once a week. Furthermore, a significant 24% of the participants reported consuming this content multiple times a day.

Figure 4.4.

Frequency of Foodies' Content Consumption.



Martinez, D. (2023). Frequency of Foodies' Content Consumption. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°1 (Female, 23): “I check my Instagram feed daily, so I tend to see content several times a day. Sometimes I even catch up on their stories to see what they've been eating lately.”

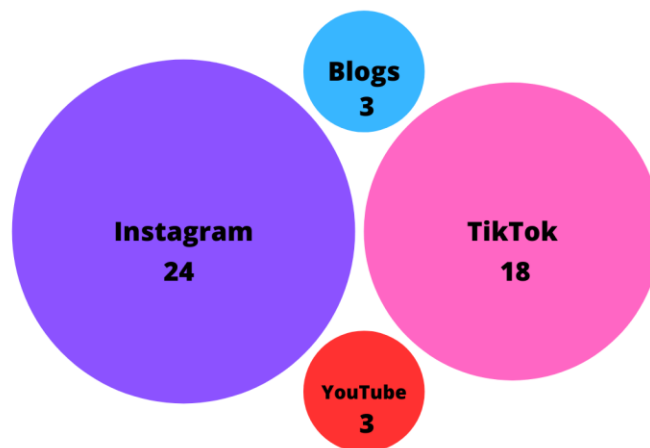
Interviewee N°12 (Female, 23): “Every day I must have a video showing some hidden gem in Bogota.”

- Social Media Platforms

The forthcoming density chart showcases the preferences of individuals in terms of social media platforms for accessing content produced by food enthusiasts, also known as foodies. This visualization provides a depiction of the concentration and distribution of usage across various online channels for consuming gastronomic-related content.

Figure 4.5.

Density Distribution of Social Media Platforms for Consuming Foodie Content: Visual Representation.



Martinez, D. (2023). Density Distribution of Social Media Platforms for Consuming Foodie Content: Visual Representation. [Density Plot].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°8 (Male, 23): “Instagram and TikTok are the social networks I use the most, but when I have time on the weekend, I also use YouTube because I find other types of content, from restaurants with creative initiatives or street food stalls.”

Interviewee N°18 (Female, 39): “Instagram because I think it is the most used social media these days. I don't have TikTok. But also sometimes when I want to know more about a restaurant of a big businessman, an artist or just a very famous restaurant I look for blogs on the internet that give me more information not only about a dish but also about the restaurant, the history, the founder and so on, which are things that to mention in a video might take too long.”

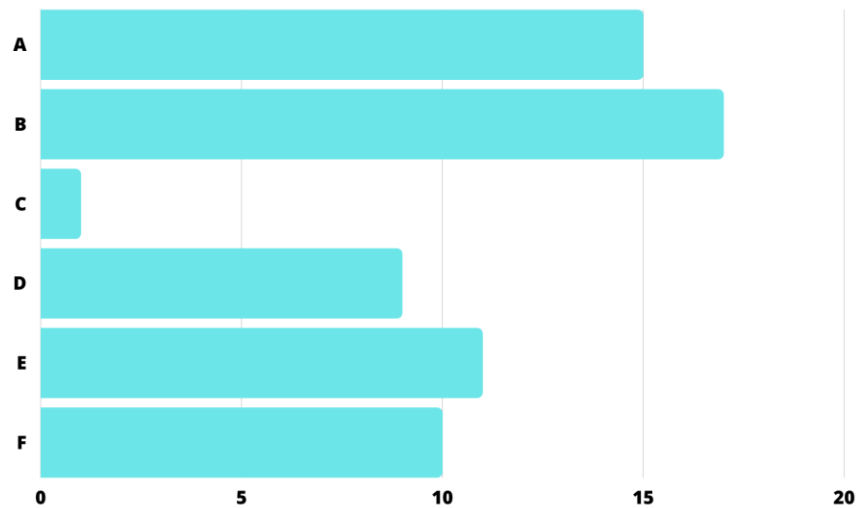
- Methods of Discovery

The following bar chart visually illustrates the various methods individuals use to discover foodies on social media. Through the process of coding, six distinct methods were identified. It's important to note that 76% of respondents indicated using multiple methods simultaneously. This chart offers a comprehensive overview of how participants engage with foodie content across different discovery avenues.

Figure 4.6.

Method of Discovery of Foodies on Social Media.

- A: Through content shared by friends and followers**
- B: Following recommendations from algorithms and platform suggestions**
- C: By searching for hashtags related to food and restaurants**
- D: Exploring ads and promoted posts from content creators**
- E: Following official accounts of restaurants and food brands that share foodie content**
- F: Looking for restaurant reviews**



Martinez, D. (2023). Method of Discovery of Foodies on Social Media. [Bar Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°19 (Female, 22): “It's not like I discover foodies often but my boyfriend sometimes sends me foodie’s videos. I think most of the time it's by searching hashtags for example like #lasagna if I'm looking for a restaurant for a friend's birthday and she really likes lasagna and once I find a restaurant I look for more reviews about the place from other foodies.”

Interviewee N°5 (Female, 23): “I mostly come across videos through algorithm-based recommendations or ads. But I also follow restaurant accounts, which is how I discover foodies. Sometimes, I also search for reviews made by foodies about certain places I have in mind.”

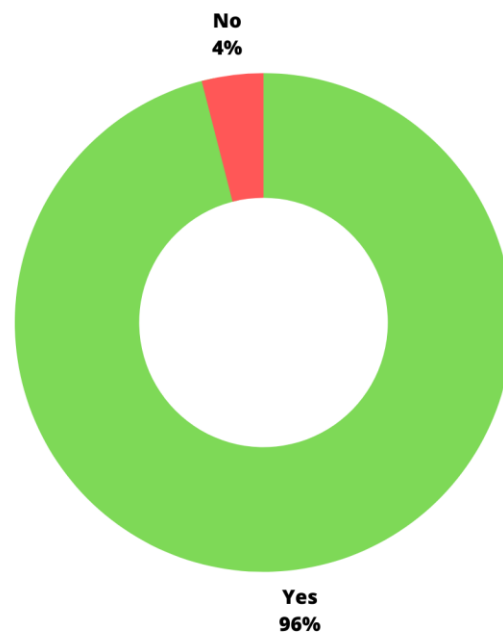
4.1.3 Influence on Purchase Decision: Restaurant Visits, Frequency, Experience

- Restaurant Visits

The direct impact of reviews conducted by "foodies" on the culinary decisions of the surveyed participants is illustrated by this pie chart. The chart clearly displays the proportion of participants who have visited a restaurant specifically due to a "foodie's" recommendation. This quantitative analysis underscores the influence of passionate food enthusiasts on contemporary gastronomic choices. Notably, 24 out of 25 interviewees affirmed that they had visited a restaurant based on a "foodie's" review.

Figure 4.7.

Proportion of Participants Visiting Restaurants based on Influencer's Reviews.



Martinez, D. (2023). Proportion of Participants Visiting Restaurants based on Influencer's Reviews. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°13 (Female, 20): “Yes! It has almost always been with my boyfriend when we are looking for a romantic place to celebrate our anniversaries.”

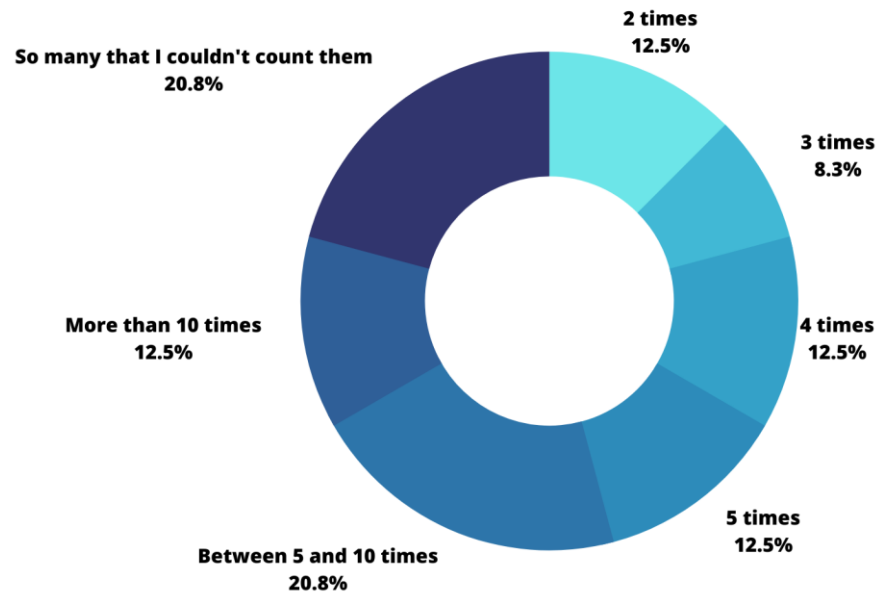
Interviewee N°17 (Female, 23): “It's actually quite interesting because despite consuming a lot of this content, there's always some reason why I decide not to go. Usually, it's either the price of the dishes or the fact that I can't find the right occasion to go. These restaurants don't seem like places to go on just any day and the ones that are casual don't fit my diet.”

- Visit Frequency

The following pie chart provides a succinct view of the frequency with which participants have chosen to visit restaurants based on "foodies" recommendations. The recurring influence of gastronomic reviews generated by food enthusiasts on consumption decisions within the surveyed sample is underscored by this quantitative analysis. Among the 24 individuals who have stated that they visited a restaurant due to a foodie's review, 20.8% claim to have followed such reviews so frequently that they couldn't even count them, while another 20.8% say they have followed these recommendations between 5 and 10 times.

Figure 4.8.

Frequency of Restaurant Visits Influenced by 'Foodies' Reviews.



Martinez, D. (2023). Frequency of Restaurant Visits Influenced by 'Foodies' Reviews. [Pie Chart].

- Experience

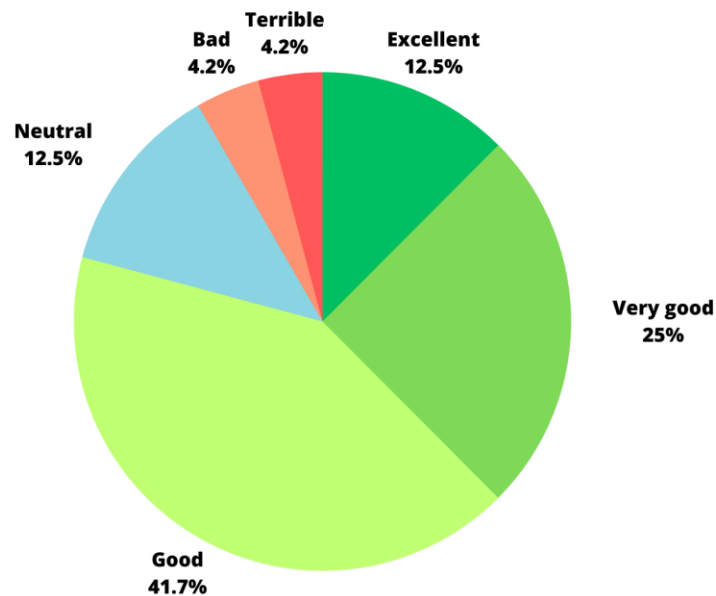
The following pie chart provides a comprehensive analysis of the experiences encountered by the 24 individuals who chose to visit restaurants influenced by "foodies" reviews.

After transcribing and coding the interviews, six recurring response options were identified that describe their overall experiences based on these reviews. Each segment of the chart reflects the proportion in which these responses manifested in the participants' experiences.

Additionally, within these experiences, it is evident that the majority, 79.2%, conveyed their experiences in a positive light, while 12.5% expressed their experiences neutrally. On the other hand, 8.4% shared experiences with a negative connotation. This chart not only highlights the consistency of responses but also illustrates how these response options are influencing the perceptions and choices of those seeking restaurant recommendations based on "foodies."

Figure 4.9.

Experiences of Participants Influenced by Foodie Reviews.



Martinez, D. (2023). Experiences of Participants Influenced by Foodie Reviews. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°11 (Male, 21): "I would say excellent; they haven't disappointed me, and I haven't had a bad experience any of the times I've followed their recommendations."

Interviewee N°22 (Male, 42): “It's not always good; foodies tend to create a lot of expectations. It's not like I had a bad experience; it was okay, but I was expecting something that would surpass my expectations.”

Interviewee N°19 (Female, 22): “Terrible, whenever I've visited restaurants, nothing is as the foodies show it... Honestly, I've stopped trusting the foodies' reviews.”

4.1.4 Enrichment of Gastronomic Knowledge: Perception of Enhancement

- Perception of Enhancement

The perceptions of the participants regarding the impact of "foodies" content on their awareness of the variety of restaurants available in Colombia are summarized in the following pie chart. Remarkably, each respondent unanimously expressed that they do indeed believe that "foodies" content contributes to enhancing their knowledge of the diverse restaurant landscape in Colombia. This pie chart visually represents the unanimous agreement among the participants in recognizing the value of "foodies" content in expanding their culinary horizons and understanding the rich gastronomic options present in the country.

Figure 4.10.

Perception of Foodies' Content Enhancing Knowledge of Restaurant Variety in Colombia.



Martinez, D. (2023). Perception of Foodies' Content Enhancing Knowledge of Restaurant Variety in Colombia. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°14 (Female, 22): “Yeah, to be honest, I'm not sure how else I could discover different restaurants from the usual ones. Also, from a business perspective, I think it's really good because they reach a strategic audience and can gain visits relatively easily and in less time.

Interviewee N°25 (Male, 29): “Yeah, besides, I'm really interested in this type of content. I've always liked food, so I watch this content from people in different parts of the world even if I don't plan on going there anytime soon.”

4.1.5 Preferences and Trust Factors: Gastronomic Content, Trust Contributors

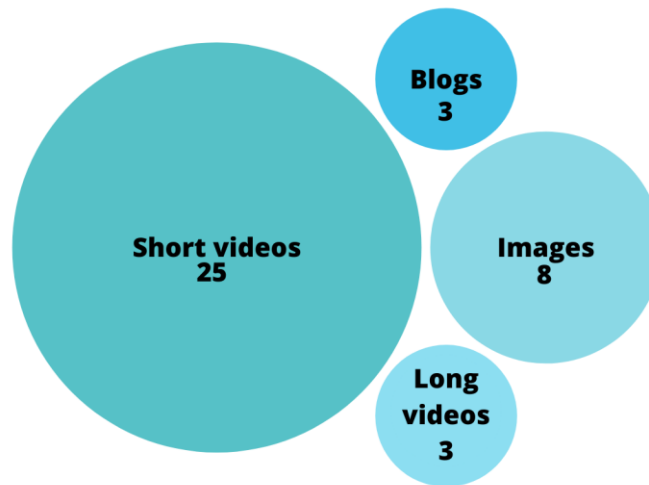
- **Format of Gastronomic Content**

The following density plots offer a comprehensive exploration of participants' content preferences within the culinary industry in terms of format and content type. Through careful transcription and categorization of interview responses, distinct themes emerged that reflect the multifaceted nature of participants' engagement with gastronomic content. These density plots offer a visual depiction of preference distribution, enabling the observation of differing levels of interest in various formats and content categories. The analysis underscores the array of tastes and preferences shaping participants' engagements with gastronomy-related content.

In the forthcoming chart illustrating the preferred format among the interviewees, it becomes apparent that content in the form of short videos is favored by 100%, while 32% express a preference for images. A mere 12% indicate a liking for long-form videos, and an additional 12% exhibit an affinity for blog or article-style content.

Figure 4.11.

Preferred Format of Food Content: Visual Representation.



Martinez, D. (2023). Preferred Format of Food Content: Visual Representation. [Density Plot].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°9 (Male, 25): “Reels, because it's the content that requires the least effort from my part. Sometimes on the internet, I search for blogs if I'm going to travel and need information about a city. Generally, travel guides suggest typical or historic restaurants in the cities. And also YouTube videos like culinary tours.”

Interviewee N°23 (Male, 23): “Instagram, TikTok and YouTube when I want to see a more complete experience, usually videos of people tasting food in very famous restaurants like El Cielo or eating street food.”

- Type of Gastronomic Content

On the flip side, the density plot illustrating the favored content type among the respondents reveals that 100% of them enjoy food reviews, 36% are fond of gastronomic experiences, and 20% also have a liking for recipes or tips and storytelling.

Figure 4.12.

Preferred Type of Food Content: Visual Representation.



Martinez, D. (2023). Preferred Type of Food Content: Visual Representation. [Density Plot].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°3 (Female,): “What I mostly watch are reviews; I think that's what all the foodies post. Sometimes I also enjoy cooking tips, but it's quite clear that they're often promotional.”

Interviewee N°18 (Female,): “Reviews and storytelling, because I also like to know what's behind a restaurant. And well, also the occasional recipe to make at home with my husband.”

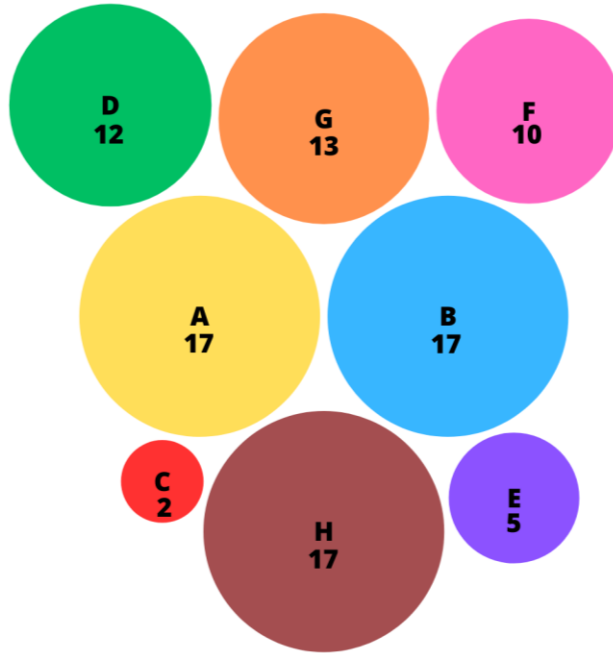
- Trust Contributors

The following density plot effectively visualizes the key aspects contributing to participants' trust in foodies' recommendations. After a meticulous process of coding respondents' answers, eight fundamental aspects have been identified as playing a pivotal role in shaping the perception of trust toward these recommendations. Each circle on the plot represents one of these aspects, and the size of the circle is directly correlated with the proportion of participants who find that aspect relevant in forming their trust. This plot provides a visual snapshot of the most influential factors in trust regarding foodies' recommendations, highlighting those aspects that were mentioned most frequently by the participants.

Figure 4.13.

Factors Influencing Trust in Foodies' Recommendations: Visual Representation.

- **A: The authenticity of the influencer in sharing real and genuine experiences**
- **B: Whether the influencer has demonstrated visiting and personally experiencing the restaurant**
- **C: If the influencer shares a similar lifestyle to the respondent**
- **D: If the influencer recommends a variety of restaurants instead of focusing on just one**
- **E: If the influencer responds to questions and comments from followers**
- **F: If the influencer's previous recommendations have been positive**
- **G: The influencer's ability to effectively explain their experiences**
- **H: The visual presentation of experiences through images or videos**



Martinez, D. (2023). Factors Influencing Trust in Foodies' Recommendations: Visual Representation. [Density Plot].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°10 (Female, 21): “That the foodie has been creating food-related content for several months, looks like me or seems to share similar interests or tastes, if they talk about vegetarian food, it's a big plus because I'm a vegetarian. That their recommendations have been good, they communicate effectively, and the images of the food are clear.”

Interviewee N°21 (Female, 22): “When they respond to people's questions in the comments, it seems like influencers who care about their audience. I also like it when the content is visually appealing, their voice is clear, and they speak honestly.”

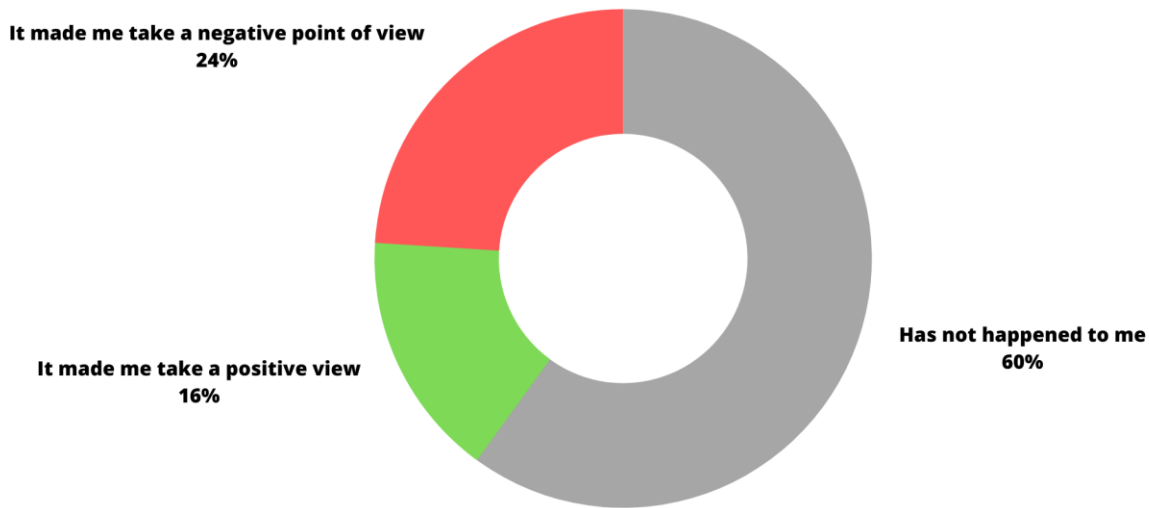
4.1.6 Opinion Changes and Perspectives: Changes & Reasons

- Changes & Reasons

The upcoming pie chart provides a succinct illustration of the impact of foodies' reviews on changing participants' opinions about restaurants or products. After meticulously transcribing and coding the responses from the 25 participants, a detailed analysis revealed compelling insights into the role of foodies' reviews in altering viewpoints. Among the participants, 60% indicated that they hadn't changed their opinions due to a foodie's review. However, within the remaining 40%, noteworthy trends emerged. Of this segment, 16% expressed a positive shift in perception or a second chance given to a restaurant following a negative experience, attributed to a foodie's review. Conversely, 24% recounted experiences marked by initial positive expectations based on a foodie's review, which eventually led to disappointment. This chart encapsulates the nuances of these diverse experiences and the varying impact of foodies' reviews on opinion changes.

Figure 4.14.

Influence of Foodies' Reviews on Opinion Changes: Participant Experiences.



Martinez, D. (2023). Influence of Foodies' Reviews on Opinion Changes: Participant Experiences. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°15 (Female, 23): “During the time when tacos were heavily promoted, I went to a taquería in Chapinero that was touted as having some of the best birria tacos, but I didn't like it at all. The place was very small, unlike how they portrayed it.”

Interviewee N°16 (Female, 28): “I had gone to a restaurant with my husband, and it was a terrible experience. The food was bad, the service was poor, there was a lot of noise, but later, many influencers posted reviews saying the place was good and the food looked quite appealing. So, my husband and I decided to give it another try, and this time it went well for us.

4.1.7 Authenticity and Credibility: Perception of Authenticity

- Perception of Authenticity

The upcoming pie chart presents a visual representation of the diverse perspectives expressed by participants regarding the authenticity of foodie-generated content recommendations. After transcribing and coding the interview responses, five distinct recurring viewpoints emerged. This chart offers insights into the distribution of these perspectives among the participants. Notably, the chart indicates that 52% of the respondents believe that influencer reviews may be influenced to some extent, but are primarily genuine in nature.

Figure 4.15.

Perceptions of Authenticity in Foodie Content Recommendations.

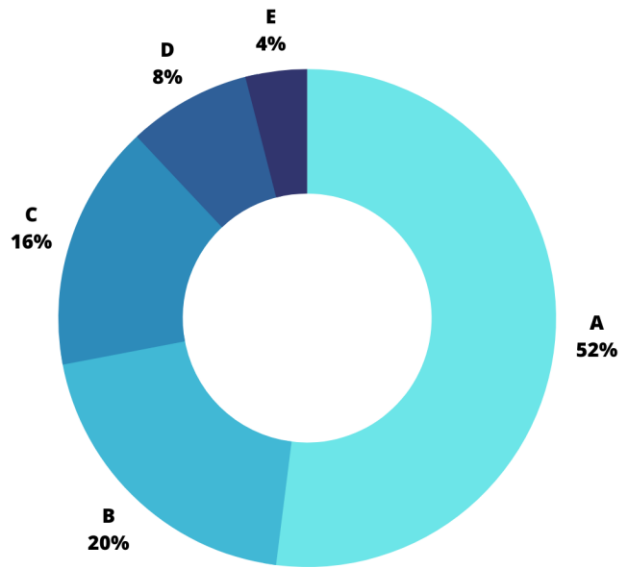
A: They may be influenced to some extent, but mostly they are genuine.

B: I suspect that some recommendations could be influenced by commercial agreements.

C: I believe that most recommendations are driven by commercial agreements.

D: Not sure / Neutral.

E: Reviews from certain influencers are motivated by commercial agreements.



Martinez, D. (2023). Perceptions of Authenticity in Foodie Content Recommendations. [Pie Chart].

The following excerpts illustrate their responses:

Interviewee N°4 (Female, 25): “I believe their reviews are genuine despite being slightly influenced, either because they're invited or paid for stories, reels, or views.”

Interviewee N°24 (Male, 23): “Among the foodies I've seen, I believe I can tell which ones are under a conflict of interest or directly have economic influence on their opinion or review.”

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation

In this Analysis and Interpretation section, an encompassing approach will be employed to analyze the collected data according to the formulated research questions. In the first step, a cross-variable analysis will be conducted, with careful consideration of the research questions at hand. This approach will uncover answers and solutions that contribute to comprehending the posed inquiries, while also revealing emerging trends through the connection of different variables.

In a subsequent phase, exploration will be extended to variables displaying trends not initially addressed in the research questions, yet proving valuable to the study. These additional trends have the potential to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the relationship between various study elements. By investigating these unanticipated trends, the goal is to enhance understanding and glean further insights that illuminate unforeseen and pertinent aspects.

4.2.1 Impact of Influencer Marketing in People's Awareness

Taking into consideration Research Question #1, which aims to find out how influencer marketing on social media impacts people's awareness of restaurants in the Colombian food scene. Several categories have been analyzed along with the variables City and Perception of Improvement to detect trends in Discovery Methods and Social Media Platforms.

From those interviewed, 96% mentioned that they discover foodie influencers through content shared by friends or followers, or by following algorithm suggestions on platforms, or sometimes both. Among this 96%, which includes 24 participants, 23 said they consume this content on Instagram, and 17 through TikTok.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Instagram and TikTok algorithms play a vital role in getting the word out about restaurants through influencers in Colombia. Additionally, it's worth noting that both platforms provide ways to share content with friends and followers and have discussions, unlike platforms such as YouTube or blog websites, which lack similar features.

On the other hand, even though there is a limited number of participants from different cities, the strong presence of Instagram and TikTok underscores their importance in promoting restaurants.

As for the Perception of Enhancement, it is reliable to state that it is independent and is not influenced by changes in the other variables analyzed. This is because every participant, all 100% of them, agreed that foodie content on social media boosts their knowledge of various restaurants available in Colombia. This highlights how influencers positively impact discovering culinary options.

4.2.2 Impact of types of influencer content on consumer's purchase intention

Table 4.2.2.

Impact of types of influencer content on consumer's purchase intention.

Type of Content Consumed	Purchase Intention (Frequency)	Experience
Food Reviews	64% have visited a restaurant	75% positive
	motivated by a foodie's review at least 5 times.	19% neutral
Gastronomic Experiences		6% negative
Storytelling	36% have visited a restaurant	87.5% positive
Recipes / Tips	motivated by a foodie's review at less than 5 times.	12.5% positive

Martinez, D. (2023). Impact of types of influencer content on consumer's purchase intention.

[Table].

Considering Research Question #2, which seeks to ascertain how various content types affect individuals' purchase intentions, an analysis was conducted on the categories of Gastronomic Content, Influence on Purchase Intention, and Frequency, supplemented by Experience. This analysis aimed to uncover potential trends within the responses offered by the interviewees.

Among the participants, 100% expressed their liking for food reviews, followed by 36% who also demonstrated interest in content related to gastronomic experiences. This suggests that food reviews are particularly popular among consumers and exert a significant impact on purchase intention. Further delving into the results, it is observed that aspects repeatedly highlighted by the interviewees regarding the type of content that captures their attention point towards food reviews being most prevalent on social media and being the content most frequently posted by gastronomic influencers. Consequently, they are also the most consumed.

On the other hand, concerning storytelling-type content, respondents mentioned finding it engaging and appealing, as it allows them to gain deeper insights into the restaurant, its history, and its proprietors. They cited content creators known as "BogotaEats" as examples of those who employ storytelling throughout their content, not solely on food or restaurant reviews.

In connecting the Gastronomic Content variable with the Influence on Purchase Decision, it was discovered that 64% of interviewees affirmed having visited a restaurant influenced by foodies' reviews at least five times. Among these 16 individuals, 75% rated their experiences as "good," "very good," or "excellent."

This shows that the majority of respondents who frequent restaurants rate their experiences positively. This finding corroborates the direct impact of foodies' food reviews on purchase intention and restaurant visits, but also underlines the reliability of their recommendations as a reliable source of information.

However, it is important to mention that since all respondents prefer food reviews and sometimes one or more types of content, it is not possible to determine the individual impact of other types of content.

Furthermore, this suggests that influencers are mindful of their image and selectively curate the content they publish, avoiding mentioning negative experiences by showing them as good ones motivated by commercial agreements or some kind of incentive.

4.2.3 Impact of Perceived Authenticity of Influencers in Purchase Intention

Table 4.2.3.

Purchase Intention by Perception of Authenticity.

Perception of Authenticity	Purchase Intention (Frequency)	Experience
52% perceive that recommendations may be influenced to some extent, but for the most part they are genuine.	61% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodie's review at least 5 times.	92% positive 8% neutral
36% perceive that some or most recommendations are influenced by commercial agreements.	66% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review at least 5 times.	62.5% positive 25% neutral 12.5% positive

Martinez, D. (2023). Purchase Intention by Perception of Authenticity. [Table].

Based on the Research Question #3, which aims to determine the role of perceived authenticity of influencers in purchase intention, the categories of Perception of Authenticity and Influence on Purchase Intention have been analyzed to identify potential trends and patterns among the responses provided by the interviewees.

Fifty-two percent of the interviewees perceive that the content from foodies may be influenced to some extent, but for the most part, it is genuine. Patterns have been found among these interviewees, indicating a general trust in the authenticity of foodies, yet they also harbor some doubts about potential exaggerations by certain influencers.

Based on the 13 individuals perceiving content created by foodies as mostly genuine, 61% have visited a restaurant prompted by a piece of content from a foodie at least five times, and 92% percent have generally appreciated their experience positively. Several interviewees mention that foodies' recommendations influence their decisions to visit restaurants and that they have had positive experiences based on those recommendations.

While some interviewees express certain doubts about authenticity, the majority still trust foodies' content sufficiently to consider their recommendations when making restaurant visit decisions.

However, in seeking trends among the nine interviewees perceiving that some or most recommendations are influenced by commercial agreements, it has been found that 66% of them have undertaken at least five visits prompted by a foodie's review, and 55% percent perceive their overall experience positively. This suggests that despite interviewees perceiving some degree of commercial influence in foodies' recommendations, they visit suggested restaurants to experience it firsthand. On another note, the positive appreciation of the experience in most cases

reinforces the theory discussed in section 4.2.2, which posits that influencers carefully curate their content and words.

From the results, it is plausible to state that the role of perceived authenticity of influencers does not significantly influence purchase intention through influencer marketing in the restaurant industry in Colombia.

4.2.4 Exploration of Additional Trends

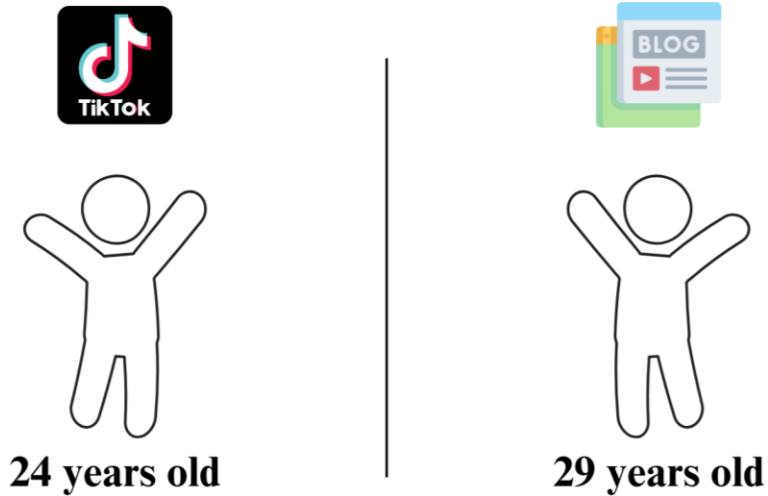
- Impact of Age on Platform Preferences

The relationship between the age of the respondents and their choice of social media platforms for consuming foodie content is a key aspect to understanding generational trends. Participants who use TikTok have an average age of 24, while those who prefer blogs are around 29 years old. It's noteworthy that the majority of the respondents are 23 years old, which might indicate a connection between this age and platform preference. This underscores how age can influence how people engage with online culinary content.

It's important to mention that according to Statista, as of July 2023, the majority of its users were between the ages of 18 and 24. This correlation supports the idea that younger users tend to opt for social media platforms that align with their age groups. In turn, this reinforces the notion that age influences how people engage with online culinary content.

Figure 4.16.

Average age of Platform' Users.



Martinez, D. (2023). Average Age of Platform' Users. [Image].

- Impact of Age on Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intention

Table 4.2.4.1.

Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention by Age Groups.

Age of interviewees	Perception of Authenticity	Purchase Intention (Frequency)
20-23 y/o	47% perceive the content to be mostly genuine	57% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review at least 5 times
25-42 y/o	66% perceive the content to be mostly genuine	83% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review

Martinez, D. (2023). Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention by Age Groups. [Table].

By segregating participants into two distinct groups according to their age and occupation, it has been observed that individuals aged 25-42 perceive foodie-generated content as predominantly authentic 19% more than those aged 20-23. In addition, the former group shows a 26% greater inclination to visit restaurants based on influencer-generated content at least five times compared to the latter, younger group.

These findings may suggest that experience and maturity could wield an influence over how individuals perceive and place trust in foodie content across social media platforms.

Younger interviewees might approach content authenticity more cautiously or skeptically.

Conversely, older respondents might have developed greater trust in the authenticity of foodies and, consequently, may be more amenable to making purchasing decisions based on their recommendations.

Additionally, considering that interviewees aged 25 to 39 might be at a life stage with potentially greater purchasing power compared to their younger counterparts, it is plausible that they possess more resources available to indulge in frequent restaurant visits. This could contribute to their readiness to explore foodie recommendations and venture into novel dining experiences based on their content.

Hence, the synergy between a heightened perception of authenticity and increased purchasing capacity within the age group of 25 to 39 might be bolstering their greater inclination

to make purchase decisions influenced by foodies and to repeatedly visit restaurants recommended by them.

- Impact of Gender on Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intention

Table 4.2.4.2.

Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention by Gender.

Gender of Interviewees	Perception of Authenticity	Purchase Intention (Frequency)
Female	60% perceive the content to be mostly genuine	60% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review at least 5 times
Male	40% perceive the content to be mostly genuine	70% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review at least 5 times

Martinez, D. (2023). Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention by Gender. [Table].

Upon segregating the participants by gender, it has been observed that women perceive content created by foodies to be mostly genuine by a margin of 20% more than men. However, men have visited restaurants at least 5 times due to a foodie's review, 10% more than women.

Although women perceive the content as more authentic, men exhibit a higher propensity to make purchase decisions influenced by foodies by frequently visiting recommended restaurants. This suggests that, despite their slightly lower authenticity perception, men are more inclined to act upon foodie recommendations with greater frequency than women.

- Impact of Platform Preferences on Perceived Authenticity & Purchase Decision

It's important to note that only 24% of the interviewees consume foodie-generated content exclusively through a single platform, according to their answers. Therefore, in order to identify trends within specific segments of the sample, it's feasible to divide the sample into two groups:

Group 1: Those who consume content via Instagram, sometimes in conjunction with YouTube and/or blogs.

Group 2: Those who consume content through TikTok, often in conjunction with Instagram, YouTube, and blogs.

Table 4.2.4.3.

Relationship between Perception of Authenticity, Purchase Intent, and Experience Based on Preferred Social Media Platforms.

Group of Interviewees	Perception of Authenticity	Purchase Intention (Frequency)	Experience
Group 1	57% perceive the content to be mostly genuine	85% have visited a restaurant motivated by a foodies review at least 5 times	85% positive 15% neutral 0% negative
Group 2	50% perceive the content to be mostly	58% have visited a restaurant motivated	76% positive 12% neutral

genuine by a foodies review at 12% negative
least 5 times






Martinez, D. (2023). Relationship between Perception of Authenticity, Purchase Intent, and Experience Based on Preferred Social Media Platforms. [Table].

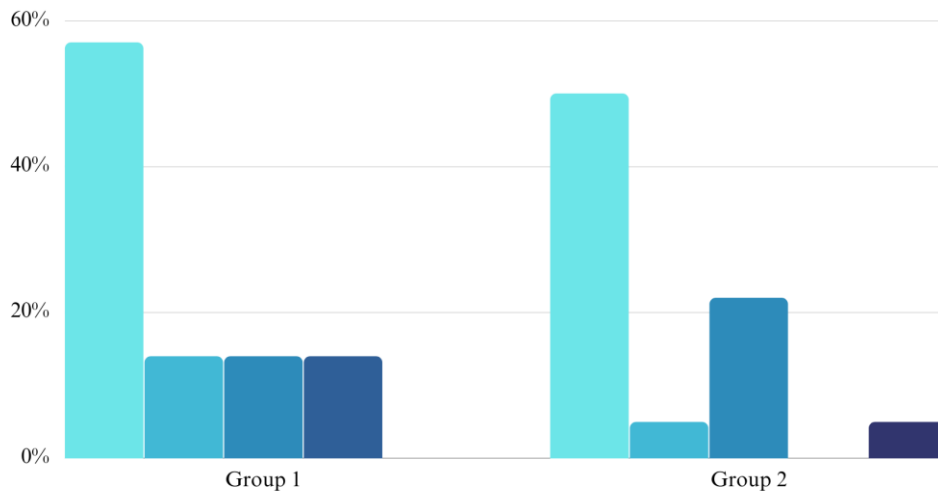
- Impact of Platform Preferences on Perceived Authenticity

Group 1 exhibits a stronger perception of authenticity (57% perceive the content as mostly genuine) compared to Group 2 (50% perceive the content as mostly genuine). This suggests that, at least within this sample, consumers who favor Instagram may find the content to be more authentic compared to other platforms. The choice of social platform for consuming foodie content appears to have an impact on the perception of authenticity.

Figure 4.17.

Perception of Authenticity by Platform Preferences.

-  They may be influenced to some extent, but for the most part they are genuine.
-  Not sure / Neutral.
-  I suspect that some recommendations may be influenced by commercial agreements.
-  Some influencers recommend restaurants because of commercial agreements.
-  I believe that most of the recommendations are motivated by commercial agreements.



Martinez, D. (2023). Perception of Authenticity by Platform Preferences. [Bar chart].

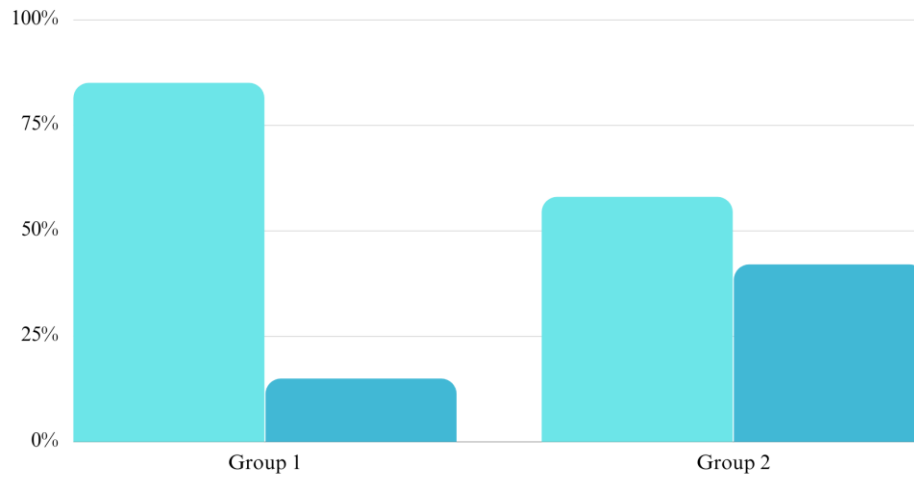
- Impact of Platform Preferences on Visit Frequency & Experience

Group 1 exhibits a high frequency of restaurant visits motivated by foodie reviews, with 85% visiting at least 5 times. Group 2 also shows a significant visit frequency, with 58% visiting at least 5 times. However, it's interesting to note that while 76% of Group 2 appreciated their experiences as positive, a small percentage (12%) found their experiences negative, in contrast to Group 1 where 85% rated their experiences positively, and none of the interviewees rated their experiences negatively.

Figure 4.18.

Visit Frequency by Platform Preferences.

- Have visited a restaurant motivated by the experience of a foodie at least 5 times.
- Have visited a restaurant motivated by the experience of a foodie less than 5 times.

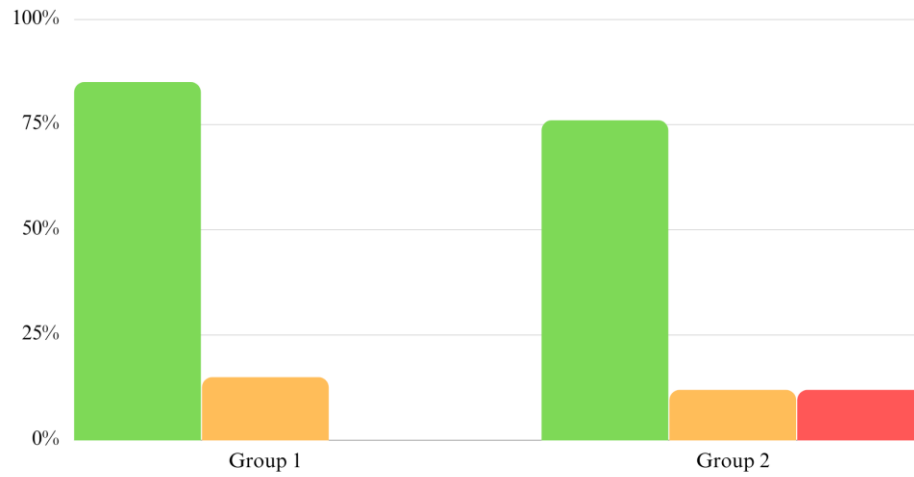


Martinez, D. (2023). Visit Frequency by Platform Preferences. [Bar chart].

Figure 4.19.

Experience by Platform Preferences.

- Positive experience
- Neutral experience
- Negative experience



Martinez, D. (2023). Experience by Platform Preferences. [Bar chart].

The choice of social platform for consuming foodie content seems to have an impact on restaurant experiences. Instagram consumers might feel more confident in the authenticity of the content and be more content with their experiences compared to those who consume content through TikTok and other platforms.

5. CONCLUSIONS & PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Impact of Influencer Marketing in People's Awareness. In alignment with the exploration of Research Question #1, which delves into assessing the impact of influencer marketing on consumer awareness within Colombia's restaurant landscape, valuable insights have been generated by the investigation conducted. The role of influencer marketing in shaping public knowledge of dining options was the focus of this inquiry.

Through a thorough examination encompassing various categories and important variables, significant patterns have surfaced. It is abundantly clear that contemporary influencer marketing is profoundly influenced by the digital landscape. Within this framework, discovery pathways have transformed, encompassing algorithm-driven recommendations and content shared by peers. These observations underline the evolving dynamics of how information spreads in today's digital era.

Particularly noteworthy are the platforms Instagram and TikTok, which have emerged as prominent conduits in this realm. Their algorithmic mechanisms serve as pivotal agents, facilitating the introduction of consumers to restaurants through influencers. The interactive

nature of these platforms, in comparison to traditional avenues like YouTube or blogs, sets them apart.

Concurrently, the unanimity among participants regarding the Perception of Enhancement highlights the positive influence of content created by influencers and indicates that changes in other considered variables do not alter people's awareness. This widespread impact goes beyond the aspects analyzed, underscoring the pivotal role of influencers in enhancing people's understanding of Colombia's diverse culinary offerings.

In summary, the research provides a view of the ever-evolving world of influencer marketing, emphasizing its essential role in shaping consumer perception and generating ideas about dining venues. As algorithms exert an increasing impact, the collaboration between influencers and platforms gains significant value in driving culinary exploration.

Impact of types of influencer content on consumer's purchase intention. Aligned with Research Question #2, which investigates the influence of diverse influencer content on consumer purchase intention, valuable insights have been garnered from the analysis of Gastronomic Content, Influence on Purchase Intention, Frequency, and Experience variables.

Food reviews emerge as a unanimous favorite among participants, while additional interest is found in gastronomic experiences content. The prominence of these preferences underscores the central role of food reviews in shaping purchase intention, further underscored by their regular presence and sharing by gastronomic influencers. The appeal of storytelling content adds depth beyond conventional reviews.

In connecting Gastronomic Content with Influence on Purchase Decision, a compelling correlation emerges. The results further underscore that food reviews wield a significant

influence on people's purchase intentions. Visits to restaurants influenced by foodies' reviews reflect a strong trend, reinforcing the tangible impact of food reviews on consumer choices.

In essence, these findings underline the persuasive role of influencer content in guiding consumer decisions, augmenting the significance of these platforms in shaping culinary exploration.

Impact of Perceived Authenticity of Influencers in Purchase Intention. In accordance with Research Question #3, the examination of the influence of perceived authenticity of influencers on purchase intention has yielded insights drawn from the analysis of the Perception of Authenticity and Influence on Purchase Intention categories.

Significant patterns have been identified among interviewees concerning their perception of content from foodies. While occasional doubts about potential exaggerations by certain influencers are acknowledged, the prevailing perception is that the content is genuine. Among those who perceive foodies' content as predominantly authentic, an encouraging trend is the inclination to visit restaurants prompted by foodie content. As a result, these visits lead to positive experiences, highlighting the substantial impact of perceived authenticity on purchase intention.

Despite intermittent reservations about authenticity, a prevalent confidence in foodies' content is evident, exerting a significant influence on restaurant visits and consumer decision-making. Furthermore, insights from participants acknowledging commercial influence reveal that many prioritize firsthand restaurant experiences even in the presence of such acknowledged influence.

In summary, the findings affirm that perceived authenticity plays a significant role in purchase intent through influencer marketing in Colombia's restaurant sector, even though not a singularly dominant one. While reliance on foodie content undeniably drives restaurant visits and cultivates positive experiences, it is noteworthy that even individuals considering potential commercial influence remain motivated to patronize restaurants based on foodie reviews.

5.1.1 General Conclusion

Throughout this research, has been conducted a comprehensive exploration of the impact of influencer marketing on individuals' purchase intention within the Colombian culinary industry. The obtained results reveal essential connections between various factors influencing consumer decision-making, underscoring the significance of this form of marketing within the industry.

Influencer marketing has shown to have a noteworthy impact on people's awareness. This initial step is vital in triggering purchase intention. Exposure through influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok has proven to be an effective means of visually and attractively presenting culinary experiences, laying a solid foundation for exploration and subsequent informed decision-making.

A particularly influential combination is people's preference for short video food reviews on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. These dynamic formats enable consumers to directly engage with culinary experiences presented by influencers. This personal connection translates

into greater influence on purchase intention, as individuals can vividly visualize and relate to gastronomic offerings.

Interestingly, perceived authenticity of influencers has demonstrated a limited influence on purchase intention. While authenticity is a crucial component, findings suggest that even the perception of recommendations being influenced by commercial agreements does not diminish purchase intention. This suggests that the audience understands the commercial nature of these collaborations and still finds the provided information valuable.

The research also unveils demographic differences in purchase intention. Individuals in the age range of 25 to 42 show higher purchase intention compared to those under 25. Additionally, men exhibit higher purchase intention than women. These results highlight the importance of considering demographic and preference differences when developing influencer marketing strategies.

Regarding content preferences, individuals consuming content created by foodies through Instagram and occasionally YouTube and/or blogs display greater purchase intention compared to those also using TikTok. This suggests that audiences more engaged with detailed and descriptive content find greater value in recommendations presented by gastronomic influencers outside of TikTok.

In summary, this research demonstrates that influencer marketing plays a pivotal role in purchase intention within the Colombian culinary industry. Creating awareness, establishing a personal connection through visual formats, considering perceived authenticity, and understanding demographic and preference differences are key factors in influencing consumer purchase decisions. As the industry evolves, it is imperative for marketing strategies to continually adapt to fully leverage this influential impact.

5.1.2 Significant Findings

- Impact of Age on Platform Preferences

Within the scope of examining the influence of age on preferences for social media platforms in consuming foodie content, a pivotal understanding of generational trends has come to light.

The analysis unveiled a discernible connection between age and platform preference.

Notably, participants inclined towards TikTok exhibited an average age of 24, while those favoring blogs were approximately 29 years old. Particularly significant is the observation that a considerable proportion of participants are aged 23—a finding that suggests a correlation between this age bracket and platform choice. This alignment between age and platform preference elucidates the profound role age plays in shaping individuals' interactions with online culinary content.

This insight underscores the intricate interplay between generational tendencies and digital engagement. As certain platforms resonate more effectively with distinct age groups, this understanding is essential for crafting tailored influencer marketing strategies that align with the preferences of target demographics.

- Impact of Age on Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention

In dissecting the impact of age on authenticity perception and purchase intention, a nuanced panorama has unfolded, particularly when distinguishing between two age groups.

The analysis reveals a discernible contrast between individuals aged 25 to 39 and those aged 20 to 23. The former demographic exhibits a propensity for heightened perception of foodie-generated content authenticity. Moreover, this group demonstrates an appreciable inclination to visit restaurants propelled by influencer content, surpassing their younger counterparts.

These insights underscore the dynamic interplay between age, authenticity perception, and purchasing tendencies. Younger interviewees may approach authenticity with measured skepticism, while older respondents could embrace authenticity more readily, influencing their purchasing decisions based on influencer endorsements.

Furthermore, the purchasing power associated with the age group 25 to 39 accentuates their capacity for frequent restaurant exploration. This readiness contributes to their keenness in engaging with foodie recommendations and embarking on culinary journeys.

The synergy of authenticity perception and augmented purchasing capacity among those aged 25 to 42 underscores their proclivity to make purchase decisions based on influencer endorsements and visit recommended restaurants.

This realization holds substantial implications for influencer marketing strategies, highlighting the intricate interplay between age, authenticity, purchasing capacity, and decision-making patterns.

- Impact of Gender on Perception of Authenticity and Purchase Intention

In unraveling the interplay between gender, authenticity perception, and purchase intention, a thought-provoking narrative unfolds, revealing nuanced distinctions between male and female participants.

Gender-based differentials are underscored by the analysis. A pronounced inclination to perceive foodie-generated content as predominantly authentic is demonstrated by women, while a distinct propensity—frequent restaurant visits prompted by foodie reviews—is exhibited by men. This intriguing observation suggests that, despite varying levels of authenticity perception, men exhibit a robust proclivity to translate foodie endorsements into frequent restaurant exploration.

This intriguing contrast underscores the intricate interplay between authenticity perception and actionable choices. Women's focus on authenticity aligns with men's disposition towards tangible actions, highlighting the multifaceted response to influencer content shaped by variables beyond perception.

These insights offer a valuable compass for crafting gender-sensitive influencer marketing strategies, reflecting the intricacies of gender preferences and behaviors.

- Impact of Platform Preferences on Perceived Authenticity & Purchase Decision:

Exploring the interplay between platform preferences, perceived authenticity, and purchase decisions has illuminated pivotal trends, drawing distinctions between two distinct consumer segments.

- Impact of Platform Preferences on Perceived Authenticity

Amid Group 1, characterized by a predilection for Instagram, a notable uptick in perceived authenticity is discerned, with content often seen as predominantly genuine. In parallel, Group 2, embracing TikTok as a prominent platform, exhibits a slightly subdued

authenticity perception. This discernment underscores the sway of chosen platforms on perceived content authenticity—a dynamic influenced by user tendencies.

- Impact of Platform Preferences on Visit Frequency & Experience

Within Group 1, a robust frequency of restaurant visits spurred by foodie reviews is evident, often exceeding five visits. Similarly, Group 2 showcases substantial visit frequency. Curiously, while Group 2 relays predominantly positive experiences, a marginal percentage share experiences of a contrasting nature. In contrast, Group 1 consistently reports affirmative experiences, void of any negative encounters.

Evidently, the platform avenue selected for engaging with foodie content wields tangible influence on restaurant experiences. Instagram aficionados seem to cultivate heightened authenticity perceptions and derive greater satisfaction from their experiences, contrasting with their counterparts who favor TikTok and other platforms.

These insights bear strategic implications, advocating for tailored influencer marketing strategies responsive to the intricate nexus of platform preferences, authenticity perception, and subsequent consumer experiences.

5.1.3 Knowledge Contribution

This qualitative study has made substantial contributions to the field of influencer marketing and purchase decision-making in the restaurant industry in Colombia. Through an in-

depth analysis of participant responses, patterns and trends have been identified that offer new insights and valuable knowledge in the following areas:

- Understanding Influencer Marketing Impact on Consumer Awareness:

This study has contributed to understanding how influencer marketing influences consumers' awareness of the diversity of restaurants in Colombia. The detailed research into the interaction between influencers and audiences has revealed how foodies' recommendations on social media play a fundamental role in creating awareness, highlighting their role as an initial stage in the purchase process.

- Insights into Content Preferences and Purchase Intention:

An important contribution of this study lies in the identification of consumers' content preferences and their relationship with purchase intention. By focusing on the most attractive content type, in this case, food reviews in short video format, a clear insight has been provided into how this type of content directly impacts consumers' decision to visit restaurants.

- Nuanced Understanding of Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intent:

The exploration of influencers' perceived authenticity and its relationship with purchase intention has added a layer of complexity to the existing understanding. By identifying varying levels of commercial influence in influencers' recommendations, the understanding has been expanded that perceived authenticity is not necessarily the sole determining factor in purchase intention.

- Generation and Gender Dynamics in Purchase Intention:

This study has contributed valuable knowledge on how age and gender influence purchase intention in response to influencer marketing. The differentiation between different age and gender groups has highlighted that marketing strategies need to be personalized to address the distinct preferences and behaviors of these subcategories.

- Platform Preferences and Purchase Behavior:

An essential contribution has been the exploration of how platform preferences for consuming content influence purchase intention. By identifying the relationship between platform choice and the frequency of restaurant visits, the understanding has been enriched regarding how purchase decisions are influenced by the medium of content consumption.

In Colombia, where comprehensive statistics on marketing, let alone influencer marketing, are limited, these findings take on even greater significance. In summary, this study has made a series of significant contributions to the field of influencer marketing and purchase decision-making in the restaurant industry in Colombia. The identified areas have been enriched with new perspectives and patterns, providing valuable insights both for academia and marketing professionals seeking to design effective strategies in a constantly evolving consumer landscape.

5.2 Practical Recommendations

For Colombian Government Entities Responsible for Data:

- **Collaboration for Data Enrichment:** Collaborate with industry stakeholders to gather comprehensive data on the impact of influencer marketing on various sectors, particularly the restaurant industry. This collaboration can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and trends.

For Companies and Restaurants:

- **Strategic Awareness Enhancement:** Leverage influencer marketing as a pivotal tool to amplify consumer awareness about the diverse range of restaurants in Colombia. Recognize its role as an essential step in the consumer journey, paving the way for purchase intention.
- **Visual Appeal and Engagement:** Harness the power of visually appealing food reviews presented in short video formats on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Recognize the high influence of this combination on purchase intention and consider creating engaging, concise content to captivate potential customers.
- **Balance Authenticity with Transparency:** While perceived authenticity of influencers might not be the sole driver of purchase intention, embrace transparency. Recognize that consumers who acknowledge the potential for commercial influence can still exhibit a high intention to make purchasing decisions.

For Foodies & Influencers:

- **Storytelling with Impact:** Incorporate impactful storytelling into your content strategy. Embrace the significance of personal narratives in fostering deeper connections with your audience, amplifying authenticity, and fueling purchase intention.
- **Engage Across Platforms:** Extend your influence by engaging across platforms where audiences prefer short video content. Recognize that Instagram and TikTok hold substantial potential to enhance your reach and influence on purchase intention.

For Further Research:

- **Long-Term Impact Analysis:** Explore the enduring effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. Investigate how awareness generated through influencer campaigns translates into sustained purchase intentions over time.
- **Contextualizing Age and Purchase Intention:** Further examine the dynamics driving the higher purchase intent observed among 25-42 year olds compared to those under 25. Investigate how generational factors intersect with purchase intent and consider potential implications for targeting strategies.
- **Gender and Purchase Intent Analysis:** Delve deeper into the gender-based differences in purchase intention. Investigate the underlying factors contributing to the higher purchase intent among men compared to women, and how they relate to influencer content.
- **Comparative Platform Influence:** Conduct an in-depth analysis of how content consumption on Instagram, YouTube, blogs, articles, and TikTok influences purchase

intention. Uncover nuances in audience engagement and explore potential strategies to optimize influencer content for varying platforms.

5.3 Importance & Impact

The findings of this study carry significant importance for both academia and industry professionals operating within the realms of influencer marketing and the restaurant industry in Colombia. The implications of the research results extend beyond mere observations, encapsulating actionable insights that can shape strategies and decision-making in a dynamic market landscape.

- **Enhancing Consumer Awareness and Purchase Intention:** The study sheds light on the pivotal role of influencer marketing in elevating consumer awareness about the diversity of restaurants in Colombia. Recognizing influencer marketing as a catalyst for triggering consumer journeys, this research underscores its direct connection to purchase intention. This recognition has the potential to reshape marketing strategies, emphasizing the importance of strategic engagement with influencers to drive consumer interest and intent.
- **Optimizing Content Formats and Platforms:** The preference for concise food reviews presented through video formats on platforms like Instagram and TikTok holds substantial implications. Acknowledging this preference and its influence on purchase

intention, industry practitioners can tailor content strategies to align with consumer preferences. Engaging with audiences through visually captivating content could result in heightened brand resonance and positively impact purchasing decisions.

- Navigating the Perception of Authenticity: The nuanced understanding that perceived authenticity of influencers may not be the sole determinant of purchase intention is a significant insight. Acknowledging that consumers remain engaged and intend to purchase even when recognizing potential commercial influences underscores the importance of transparent communication. Industry stakeholders can work towards striking a balance between authenticity and transparency in influencer collaborations.
- Segment-Specific Strategies: Identifying demographic trends, such as the higher purchase intention among individuals aged 25 to 42 and men, provides actionable insights for targeted marketing efforts. Understanding these variations allows for the formulation of segment-specific strategies that resonate with diverse consumer groups, ultimately driving greater engagement and conversions.
- Guiding Future Research and Data Collection: The research's implications extend beyond the current study, opening avenues for further investigation. The suggested areas for future research provide a roadmap for exploring dimensions such as the enduring impact of influencer marketing, the interplay of age and gender on purchase intent, and the influence of content consumption across different platforms. These explorations can lead

to more comprehensive insights and strategies for the evolving landscape of influencer marketing.

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the profound importance of influencer marketing and its impact on purchase intention within the Colombian restaurant industry. The insights gleaned from this research have the potential to shape marketing practices, enhance consumer engagement, and foster a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics governing consumer behavior and preferences.

6. LIMITATIONS & FUTURE

- **Lack of Specific Gastronomic Industry Statistics in Colombia:** This study is constrained by the absence of precise statistical data dedicated solely to Colombia's gastronomic sector. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism (MinCIT) aggregates data for the broader hospitality industry, rather than focusing exclusively on gastronomy. This limitation curtails a nuanced understanding of the distinct dynamics within the restaurant landscape. The absence of localized statistics restricts the depth of analysis, underscoring the need for future collaboration with relevant entities to gather targeted insights specific to the gastronomic sector.

- **Limited Marketing Data Availability in Colombia:** This study is constrained by the scarcity of comprehensive marketing data in Colombia. The absence of localized statistics on influencer marketing and consumer behavior restricts in-depth analysis. Collaborative efforts to gather specific insights would enhance understanding and provide more accurate conclusions about the relationship between influencer content and restaurant purchase intention within the Colombian context.
- **Sample Representativeness:** The study's sample was limited to a relatively small number of participants from specific age groups, genders, and cities. As such, the generalizability of the findings to the broader Colombian population might be restricted. Future research could incorporate a more diverse and representative sample to enhance the external validity of the conclusions drawn.
- **Subjectivity of Responses:** The study relied on self-reported responses from participants, which inherently carry subjectivity and potential response biases. Individuals might provide socially desirable answers or might not fully recall their purchasing decisions influenced by influencer content. Incorporating complementary methodologies, such as observational analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships studied.
- **Platform Dynamics and Trends:** The study focused on Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms without delving into the evolving nature of these platforms and their potential impact on influencer marketing. As platforms evolve, future research could explore the

emerging dynamics, algorithm changes, and emerging trends that could shape how influencer content influences purchase intention.

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