



From screen to table: an in-depth investigation of online ratings in leisure dining experiences

Paolo Cunico, Michela C. Mason, Gioele Zamparo & Andrea Moretti

To cite this article: Paolo Cunico, Michela C. Mason, Gioele Zamparo & Andrea Moretti (12 Apr 2026): From screen to table: an in-depth investigation of online ratings in leisure dining experiences, *Leisure Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/02614367.2026.2656250](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2026.2656250)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2026.2656250>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



[View supplementary material](#)



Published online: 12 Apr 2026.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 309



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

From screen to table: an in-depth investigation of online ratings in leisure dining experiences

Paolo Cunico^a, Michela C. Mason^b, Gioele Zamparo^b and Andrea Moretti^b

^aVenice School of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy; ^bDepartment of Economics and Statistics, University of Udine, Udine, Italy

ABSTRACT

Eating experiences have emerged as a popular leisure activity, frequently shared on social media or specialised review websites. Online reviews, particularly on platforms like TripAdvisor, are crucial in shaping consumer decisions by providing insight into leisure dining experiences. However, existing research relies on data from these platforms, limiting the generalisability of findings. This study addresses this gap by integrating online ratings with consumer surveys to explore the cognitive processes behind restaurant ratings. Using a sample of 1,192 individuals across 343 restaurants in Italy, multi-level structural equation modelling is applied to manage the hierarchical data structure. The findings indicate a strong relationship between TripAdvisor ratings and customers' perceptions of the service environment, validating the reliability of these ratings. These insights consolidate prior knowledge and guide consumers and practitioners, enhancing decision-making and service quality.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 19 May 2025
Accepted 1 April 2026

KEYWORDS


Leisure eating; servicescape; restaurant; online reviews; TripAdvisor; Multi-level SEM

1. Introduction

As everyday life becomes increasingly organised around leisure-oriented temporalities, eating has assumed a central role in how free time is experienced and shared (Jin et al., 2023; Schmalz et al., 2020). Within contemporary leisure cultures, eating operates as a situated, socially organised practice through which pleasure, identity, and social relations are actively produced and negotiated. Food-related leisure thus extends beyond consumption to encompass anticipation, exploration, and shared experience, positioning culinary engagement as a key way in which free time is organised and made meaningful.

Across diverse leisure settings – from food festivals (Dimitrovski et al., 2024) to tourism practices (Manimont et al., 2024) – culinary discovery has become a central site of leisure meaning-making, shaping not only individual lifestyles but also the material and symbolic production of place (Karsten et al., 2015). From a Leisure Studies perspective, food-centred leisure is deeply implicated in how places are enacted, imagined, and valued through everyday practices.

CONTACT Paolo Cunico  Cunicopaolo.cunico@unive.it  Venice School of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2026.2656250>

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Leisure eating has long been accompanied by practices of narration and sharing through which experiences are remembered, socially validated, and rendered meaningful. In contemporary digital environments, these practices are increasingly mediated by platforms that extend leisure beyond the moment of consumption itself. Online reviews, in this sense, are not merely informational artefacts but an extension of leisure practice, embedding evaluation and reflection within the organisation of everyday leisure (Cleave, 2020; Lei et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

The significance of this electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) form is well established in leisure studies (Hu et al., 2024; Quang et al., 2024; Ramos et al., 2023), including in leisure dining experiences (Zhang et al., 2014). A Leisure Dining Experience (LDE) refers to an eating-out experience – a term used interchangeably with food, dining, or gastronomic experiences in literature (Gómez-Corona & Valentin, 2019) – where customers dedicate a substantial amount of time to their meal, potentially comparable to home meal preparation (De Boer et al., 2004). Consequently, LDEs are hosted in restaurants where, despite high customer flow and relatively dense table arrangements, clients are served by waiting staff, with dining functioning as a casual, socially oriented leisure activity (Ryu & Heo, 2018). Notably, the enhanced accessibility of text-mining technologies has spurred substantial research on extracting information from online restaurant reviews (e.g., Barrera-Barrera, 2023).

However, this stream of research often relies solely on data extracted from eWOM platforms, limiting the generalisability of its findings (e.g., Poyoi et al., 2024). This characteristic highlights the need to integrate data from eWOM platforms – hence, an indirect measure – with direct ones, such as consumer surveys (Yousaf & Kim, 2025). Moreover, due to bounded rationality (Simon, 1957), consumers often make decisions based on heuristics (Ursu et al., 2023). People apply heuristics when processing information (Filiari, Acikgoz, et al., 2021) and making judgements (Menon & Raghurir, 2003), including when asked to rate the quality of LDEs. In this regard, the restaurant's ratings serve as a performance heuristic that reflects the perceived overall quality of the LDE (Filiari, Acikgoz, et al., 2021). This proxy for customer satisfaction influences others' LDE destination choices (Filiari & McLeay, 2014), especially amid cognitive overload (Ganguly et al., 2024). Therefore, given the relevance ratings play as restaurant performance heuristics and the threat posed by unreliable reviews (Filiari, Acikgoz, et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2020), there is a need to assess their reliability.

Recent research on leisure activities and restaurants has often aggregated individual-level data, such as online reviews or surveys, without accounting for the fact that multiple individuals may evaluate the same leisure establishment (e.g., Barrera-Barrera, 2023; Bhadauria et al., 2024; M. Kim & Lee, 2022; Nelson, 2021; Ramos et al., 2023). This fact can lead to stronger correlations among individuals who visited the same establishment than those who visited different ones (Wieseke et al., 2008). Such a scenario disrupts the independence of observations, which, if not adequately addressed, can lead to biased conclusions that may undermine research implications (Hox et al., 2017; Julian, 2001). This threat underscores the need for a methodology that incorporates shared customer evaluations to yield more reliable insights.

This research combines data from online restaurant reviews with customer surveys following LDE to explore the meaning of restaurant ratings, particularly those on

TripAdvisor, one of the largest hospitality review websites. It aims to address the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: Which aspects of the LDE are reflected by the online ratings?

RQ2: When accounting for shared LDE evaluations, are the TripAdvisor ratings a reliable representation of the restaurant experience (*i.e.*, a reliable performance heuristic for professional and potential customers)?

To this end, this research explores the cognitive processes underlying review ratings by linking them to customers' evaluations of LDEs, assessed shortly after the restaurant experience using validated scales. This design enables this research to evaluate whether online ratings can predict individual evaluations and verify their reliability as performance heuristics for practitioners and customers. Thus, a restaurant-level analysis employed multi-level modelling to aggregate observations ($n = 1192$) at the restaurant level, accounting for the hierarchical data structure.

This study addresses recent calls (Xiang et al., 2018; Yousaf & Kim, 2025) by demonstrating strong alignment between eWOM ratings and survey measures collected shortly after an LDE, thereby supporting the generalisability of eWOM-based research. The significant link between customers' perceptions of service environments (measured with a scale) and TripAdvisor ratings clarifies what these ratings represent.

Viewed as part of the leisure process, these findings show how platform-based ratings are woven into the temporal flow of dining out, linking anticipation and post-consumption reflection. The reliability of category-specific evaluations thus matters less as informational precision than as a socially situated resource through which leisure experiences are collectively interpreted. Rather than functioning merely as decision aids, ratings participate in the ongoing organisation of leisure, shaping how dining is imagined, enacted, and remembered within everyday leisure practices.

The results provide valuable insights for consumers and restaurant operators, enabling them to a) gain a deeper understanding of the significance of TripAdvisor ratings and b) trust these ratings despite cognitive overload, even when faced with fake reviews. With this knowledge, practitioners can more effectively adjust their physical settings, enhancing the overall perception of their service offerings. In turn, customers can make better-informed choices.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Service quality in leisure eating

Although not always seen as a leisure activity (Kelly, 1972), food and eating have increasingly become key parts of human leisure pursuits for those not experiencing hunger (Schmalz et al., 2020). Dining out is now recognised as a form of leisure, providing an escape from daily routines (Cleave, 2020) and influencing tourists' destination choices (Manimont et al., 2024). Within this evolving context, food tourism has become one of the most popular leisure activities (Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020), shaping both travel behaviour (European Travel Commission, 2024) and day trips

(Manimont et al., 2024). Culinary discovery now represents a core dimension of cultural experience, fostering virtuous movements such as the Slow Food initiative and related festivals (e.g. Dimitrovski et al., 2024), alongside less desirable outcomes such as pseudo-local cuisine in overtouristed destinations (Freire Varela, 2025; Şengül et al., 2024). More broadly, food and beverages embody traditions and cultures (Beltramo et al., 2024; Poppi & Beccaria, 2022) and contribute to consumers' eudaimonic well-being beyond basic needs (Lin et al., 2023).

The transition from a basic necessity to a leisure activity has heightened the importance of service environment atmospherics (*i.e.*, servicescape) in shaping leisure experiences, including LDEs (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994). Despite societal and technological shifts, the concept of servicescape remains relevant today as a primary factor influencing customer choices and experiences (e.g., Behera et al., 2023; Björk et al., 2023). The impact of physical environments on customer emotions, perceptions of service quality (Jang & Namkung, 2009), and satisfaction (Wakefield & Blodgett, 2016) is well-established in leisure contexts, including restaurants (M. Kim & Lee, 2022; Line & Hanks, 2020). Moreover, the servicescape can trigger long-term customer responses, such as loyalty and repeat patronage, in the hospitality industry (Kotler et al., 2017).

Over the years, the original framework has undergone several modifications, recognising service personnel as a critical element of service environments (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). One such adaptation is the scale proposed by Ryu and Jang (2008), which includes six factors: facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, layout, and service staff. In addition to accounting for the quality of the physical settings, this scale considers the impact these elements have on customers' emotions, particularly relaxation, which is especially pertinent in leisure contexts (Bhadauria et al., 2024). This research adopts this scale to examine the relationship between the components of the service environment and restaurants' online ratings on TripAdvisor.

2.2. Online reviews and heuristics in leisure activities

The analysis of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) related to consumers' leisure experiences encompasses a broad range of activities, including visits to sports stadiums (Ramos et al., 2023), war heritage sites (Quang et al., 2024), urban parks in tourist destinations (Hu et al., 2024), and restaurants (e.g. Saydam & Altun, 2023; see Table A in the Appendix). This stream of research predominantly relies on large-scale datasets of online reviews, which are typically examined using text-mining techniques such as sentiment analysis and topic modelling. While these approaches have significantly advanced the empirical investigation of leisure experiences, eWOM-based studies often draw on platform-generated data (e.g. TripAdvisor, Yelp, Google) without systematically assessing their alignment with consumers' lived experiences, thereby exposing findings to manipulated content and structural bias. A key limitation of this body of research concerns population misrepresentation. The production of online reviews is a voluntary and selective activity shaped by unequal access to digital technologies, resulting in an uneven distribution of reviews across consumers and places, with higher-income individuals and better-located restaurants consistently overrepresented (Baginski et al., 2014; Motoyama & Usher, 2020; Parikh et al., 2014). As a result, studies relying exclusively on eWOM data face limitations in terms of generalisability, prompting calls to integrate online reviews

with independent measures – such as survey data – in order to enhance validity and inclusiveness (Gruss et al., 2023; Poyoi et al., 2024; Saydam & Altun, 2023; Xiang et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2024; Yousaf & Kim, 2025).

These concerns are particularly salient in contexts where dining out constitutes a culturally dense leisure practice, such as Italy, where food and eating out are deeply embedded in everyday social life and identity (Sassatelli, 2019), and where experiential and symbolic attributes shape how restaurants are selected and evaluated (Iofrida et al., 2022). As locally grounded evaluations circulate through global digital platforms, they contribute to the transnational construction of food-related leisure imaginaries. The Italian context, therefore, offers a strategically revealing case for examining how culturally embedded leisure practices are translated into globally visible narratives and reputational signals.

Finally, the need for validation is reinforced by insights from behavioural decision-making research. Under conditions of bounded rationality (Simon, 1957), consumers rely on a limited subset of available reviews (Lei et al., 2022; Yoon et al., 2019) and apply heuristics – cognitive shortcuts that simplify decision-making (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011). In online restaurant contexts, overall ratings serve as salient performance heuristics that signal perceived service quality (Filieri, Acikgoz, et al., 2021; Filieri, Lin, et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). Because ratings are prominently displayed, they benefit from primacy and availability effects (Lei et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024), further underscoring the importance of validating eWOM-based indicators against measures independent of the platforms on which they are produced.

3. The theoretical model and hypotheses

To evaluate the alignment between TripAdvisor ratings and customers' LDE perceptions, the theoretical model illustrated in Figure 1 is proposed. This model illustrates that data on customers' restaurant experiences are collected individually and examined across five servicescape dimensions: facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting and temperature, table settings, and service staff (Ryu & Jang, 2008). These data are then aggregated at the restaurant level, accounting for respondents who enjoyed a LDE at the same restaurant, and linked to TripAdvisor ratings: atmosphere, value, service, and overall rating. The proposed theoretical model, structured hierarchically, focuses on relationships at the restaurant level. Consistent with recent leisure research demonstrating that memorable experiences shape post-visit evaluations – from food-related day trips (Manimont et al., 2024) to technology-enhanced festival experiences (Chen & Girish, 2025) – this study assumes that platform-based ratings condense and externalise visitors' post-experiential assessments of the dining environment. Given that online ratings serve as heuristics for restaurant performance (Filieri, Acikgoz, et al., 2021), we assume that an enjoyable LDE, as measured by servicescape components, will correspond to high online ratings. Accordingly, we hypothesise a positive association between servicescape perceptions and TripAdvisor ratings at the restaurant level.

3.1. Atmosphere rating and servicescape elements

Atmosphere is a multifaceted construct, encompassing all the elements that can convey a specific emotional state to customers: from the physical setting and ambient cues of the

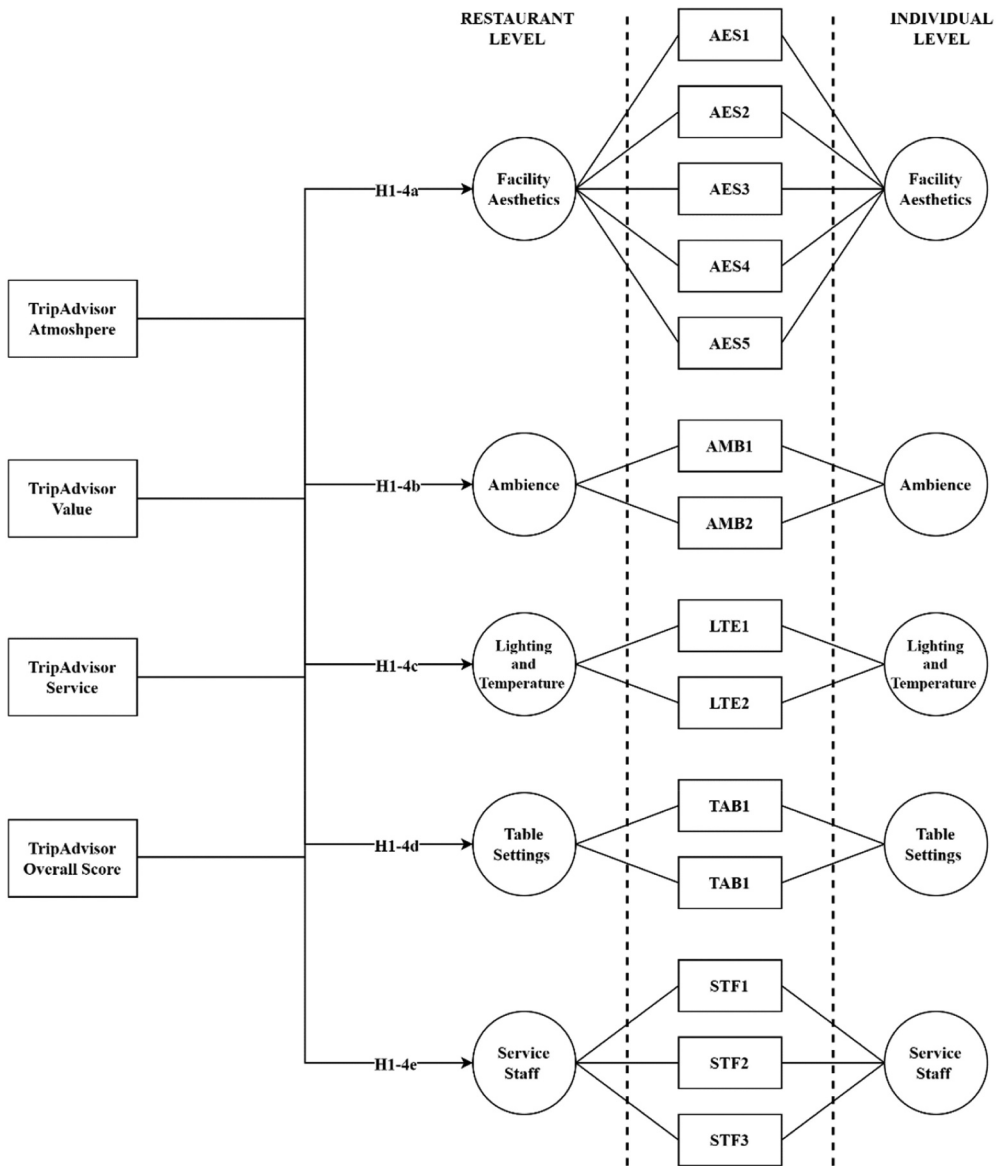


Figure 1. The theoretical model.

dining environment (Ryu & Jang, 2008) to staff appearance and behaviour (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Foundational work on servicescapes demonstrates the strong influence of décor, aesthetics, lighting, music, and ambient conditions on customers’ behavioural responses (Bitner, 1992; Jang & Namkung, 2009). Recent leisure research further shows that environmental and affective cues are particularly salient when visitors narrate and evaluate their experiences through digital platforms, with atmospheric features consistently emerging as central drivers of online review content across a range of leisure settings (Hu et al., 2024; Quang et al., 2024). Therefore, since TripAdvisor provides a specific atmosphere rating, we expect it to capture customers’

perceptions of all servicescape dimensions. Consequently, H1 proposes positive relationships between TripAdvisor's atmosphere rating and each of the five servicescape elements.

H1 a-e: TripAdvisor's atmosphere rating is positively related to servicescape elements of (a) facility aesthetics, (b) ambience, (c) lighting and temperature, (d) table settings and (e) service staff.

3.2. Value rating and servicescape elements

Perceived value represents customers' assessment of the benefits they receive relative to the costs they incur. Prior research shows that service quality influences perceived value (Ryu et al., 2012). Ambience and aesthetics signal quality and justify price premiums, while table settings and employee professionalism contribute to customers' sense of receiving fair value (Liu & Jang, 2009). In leisure dining contexts specifically, value assessments are not reducible to price alone: customers evaluate whether the overall experiential configuration of the setting – including ambience, aesthetics, and staff interaction – justifies the expenditure of money and leisure time, a judgement that is subsequently compressed into platform-based value scores which other potential diners then use as heuristics (Ganguly et al., 2024; Lei et al., 2022). Since TripAdvisor includes a dedicated value rating, we posit that favourable servicescape perceptions predict higher value evaluations. Thus, H2 posits positive associations between each servicescape dimension and the TripAdvisor value rating.

H2 a-e: TripAdvisor's value rating is positively related to servicescape elements of (a) facility aesthetics, (b) ambience, (c) lighting and temperature, (d) table settings and (e) service staff.

3.3. Service rating and servicescape elements

Both staff behaviour and the physical context of service encounters shape evaluations of service quality (Bitner, 1992; Jang & Namkung, 2009). Online review research confirms that perceived service quality strongly affects service-related ratings (Filiari & McLeay, 2014; J. Kim et al., 2022). In leisure contexts, assessments of service tend to integrate interpersonal and environmental dimensions rather than treating them as fully separable, reflecting the broader understanding in leisure studies that service encounters are embedded in and co-constituted by the spaces in which leisure unfolds (Quang et al., 2024; Ramos et al., 2023). Therefore, we expect positive relationships between servicescape constructs and TripAdvisor's service rating, and H3 reflects this rationale.

H3 a-e: TripAdvisor's service rating is positively related to servicescape elements of (a) facility aesthetics, (b) ambience, (c) lighting and temperature, (d) table settings and (e) service staff.

3.4. Overall rating and servicescape elements

The overall TripAdvisor rating summarises users' global assessments of the dining experience, including atmosphere, service and value. Since the servicescape dimensions have consistently been linked to overall satisfaction and loyalty (Ryu et al., 2012), there should be an intuitive positive relationship between servicescape evaluations and overall TripAdvisor ratings. However, previous research on TripAdvisor reviews has identified a distorted relationship between individual and overall ratings (Schuckert et al., 2016). This distortion is particularly relevant in leisure research, where aggregated platform metrics are often used as proxies for lived experience without direct validation, exposing conclusions to the structural biases embedded in algorithmic summarisation (Hu et al., 2024). Therefore, to assess whether the overall TripAdvisor rating accurately reflects reality, H4 proposes a positive relationship between servicescape elements and the overall TripAdvisor rating.

H4 a-e: TripAdvisor's overall rating is positively related to servicescape elements of (a) facility aesthetics, (b) ambience, (c) lighting and temperature, (d) table settings and (e) service staff.

4. Method

A 22-item survey was developed, and data were collected through an online questionnaire from January to May 2024 in Northern Italy. This study focuses exclusively on a random sample of individuals who enjoy a LDE. The LDE context was chosen because, among the various motivations for eating out (Warde & Martens, 2000), such experiences typically involve extended time spent in the dining setting (De Boer et al., 2004), making servicescape elements essential for enjoyment (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994). Apart from the initial demographic section, all questionnaire items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, following Ryu and Jang's (2008) servicescape scale. The evaluated constructs included facility aesthetics (AES), ambience (AMB), lighting and temperature (LTE), table settings (TAB), and service staff (STF). Before responding, participants named a restaurant they had visited for a LDE in the past month to ensure temporal contiguity (Li et al., 2020). A total of 1,236 responses were collected. After removing outliers, missing values, failed attention checks, and single-observation restaurants, the final sample comprised 1,192 units across 343 restaurants, meeting recommended thresholds for multi-level modelling (Maas & Hox, 2005). Table 1 summarises the sample characteristics.

TripAdvisor was selected for its balance of popularity and detailed review features, unlike Google, which only displays overall ratings, and Yelp, which is popular among American tourists in Italy. Additionally, as shown in Figure 2, restaurant ratings are prominently displayed, enhancing their effectiveness as heuristics (Vana & Lambrecht, 2021). Thus, following the data collection phase, the TripAdvisor ratings for each restaurant identified by the respondents were systematically retrieved and integrated into the dataset. Specifically, four ratings – atmosphere (TA_ATM), value (TA_VAL), service (TA_SER), and overall rating (TA_OS) – were matched to their respective

Table 1. Sample descriptive statistics.

		Frequency	Relative	Cumulative
Gender	Male	400	33.56%	33.56%
	Female	792	66.44%	100.00%
Age	17 - 25	635	53.27%	53.27%
	26 - 40	230	19.30%	72.57%
	40 - 60	278	23.32%	95.89%
	>60	49	4.11%	100.00%
Education level	Secondary school	923	77.43%	77.43%
	Bachelor's degree	148	12.42%	89.85%
	Masters' degree	91	7.63%	97.48%
	Other (PhD, Masters)	30	2.52%	100.00%

The screenshot displays the TripAdvisor interface for a restaurant in Udine, Italy. The top navigation bar includes the TripAdvisor logo, a search bar, and links for Discover, Trips, Review, EUR, and Sign in. The main navigation menu lists categories like Udine, Hotels, Things to Do, Restaurants (selected), Flights, Holiday Rentals, Cruises, Car Hire, and Forums. The breadcrumb trail shows the location: Europe > Italy > Friuli Venezia Giulia > Province of Udine > Udine > Udine Restaurants >. The restaurant listing includes a 'Claimed' status, a 4.5-star rating with 769 reviews, and is ranked #7 of 448 Restaurants in Udine. The price range is €€ - €€€, and the cuisine is Italian, Seafood. The restaurant is open now from 12:00 to 23:30. The main content area features a 'Reserve a table' section with an OpenTable button, a date selector for Wednesday, 18 Sept, and a table count of 2. Below this is a large photo of the restaurant's interior, which has arched brick walls and a bar. To the right of the photo are smaller images for 'Interior' (89), 'Food' (567), and 'Menu' (15). The 'Ratings and reviews' section shows a 4.5-star rating with 769 reviews, ranked #7 of 448 Restaurants in Udine, and a 'Travellers' Choice Best of the Best' badge. The 'RATINGS' section shows: Food (4.5), Service (4.5), Value (4.5), and Atmosphere (4.5). The 'Details' section lists CUISINES (Italian, Seafood), SPECIAL DIETS (Vegetarian Friendly, Vegan Options, Gluten Fre...), and MEALS (Lunch, Dinner, After-hours). The 'Location and contact' section includes a map placeholder, an email button, and a phone button. There is also an 'Improve this listing' button.

Figure 2. TripAdvisor webpage at the moment of the data collection.

restaurants. TripAdvisor's value rating was included in the analysis because respondents answered the questionnaire after visiting restaurants as if they were customers writing online reviews. Thus, their opinion was likely influenced by the price of eating out (J. Kim et al., 2022). Of note, the overall rating differs significantly from the other ratings in its computation, as it is computed using an algorithm that considers the quality, quantity, and newness of reviews (Schuckert et al., 2016). Hence, examining its relationship with

customers' actual perceptions of the restaurant experience enables a better understanding of the platform's rating system in theory and practice. Given the limitations of text-analysis-based research presented in Online reviews and heuristics in leisure activities, this research considers only numerical ratings, integrating them with independent survey data to improve research validity and to respond to calls from previous eWOM-based research (e.g. Yousaf & Kim, 2025).

4.3. Multi-level data structure, construct validity, reliability, and model validation

To avoid biased estimates in examining the relationship between the aggregate measure of TripAdvisor ratings and customers' individual perceptions, it is necessary to recognise the hierarchical nature of the data (Hox et al., 2017 ; Julian, 2001). In this study, each statistical unit is nested within a specific restaurant, which requires a multi-level approach to aggregate individual survey data and compare it with aggregate TripAdvisor ratings, thereby preventing ecological fallacy (Harrer et al., 2021).

After the multilevel model was designed, a common latent factor was included to assess common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The analysis confirmed the absence of this variance, as the common latent factor did not significantly share variance across all indicators. Subsequently, given the hierarchical nature of the data, survey-measured constructs were validated at both the individual and restaurant levels. Thus, a multi-level confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. This procedure is detailed in four steps and presented in full in the appendix (Table B).

The CFA was performed using the maximum-likelihood method to assess the reliability of the measurement model (Table 2). The overall reliability measures (ω^{2l} , α^{2l}), the restaurant-level (ω^b , α^b), and the individual-level (ω^w , α^w) reliability measures, along with alpha, and the average variance extracted (AVE), exhibit a good model fit, as demonstrated in Table 2. Moreover, the intraclass correlation (ICC) indicates significant variance at the restaurant level. A detailed description of the formulas used to calculate reliability measures is provided in the appendix.

Finally, to ensure discriminant validity, the square roots of the constructs' AVEs were compared with the correlations among the constructs at both levels. Since all the square roots of AVEs exceeded the respective correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the correlation between constructs was less than 0.80 (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022), discriminant validity was affirmed. A comprehensive description of the procedure is available in the appendix (Table C).

5. Results

After validating the measurement model, the multi-level structural equation model in Figure 1 was analysed. A random intercept model was implemented to account for the hierarchical data structure, allowing intercepts to vary across clusters (Castanho-Silva et al., 2020). In this model, intercepts are measured only at the between-level, with results shown in Table D of the appendix.

Before examining the structural path, it is worth checking the fit of the model proposed, which was good: robust $\chi^2 = 972.783$, $df = 179$, $\chi^2/df = 5.43$, robust RMSEA = 0.056, robust CFI = 0.939, robust TLI = 0.919, SRMR (individual level covariance

Table 2. CFA, ICC, standardised loadings (SL), CR, AVE and α .

	Measurement items Adapted from Ryu and Jang (2008)	ICC	SL		CR			AVE		α		
			W	B	ω^w	ω^b	ω^{2l}	W	B	α^w	α^b	α^{2l}
Servicescape	<i>Facility Aesthetics (AES)</i>				.878	.464	.898	.600	.717	.880	.448	.890
	Paintings/pictures in the restaurant are attractive. [AES 1]	.231	.799	.889								
	Wall décor is visually appealing. [AES 2]	.236	.856	.975								
	Plants/flowers make me happy. [AES 3]	.246	.701	.760								
	Colours are used to create a warm atmosphere. [AES 4]	.234	.714	.788								
	Furniture (e.g., dining table, chair) is of high quality. [AES 5]	.346	.816	.841								
	<i>Ambience (AMB)</i>				.946	.437	.954	.906	.920	.952	.426	.952
	The background elements relax me (e.g. music, scents). [AMB 1]	.233	.950	.980								
	The background elements are pleasing (e.g. music, scents). [AMB 2]	.256	.954	.940								
	<i>Lighting and Temperature (LTE)</i>				.755	.402	.799	.627	.734	.764	.332	.768
	The temperature is comfortable. [LTE 1]	.203	.693	.737								
	Lighting creates a warm and comfortable atmosphere [LTE 2]	.249	.876	.963								
	<i>Table Settings (TAB)</i>				.791	.444	.815	.653	.816	.782	.452	.813
	Tableware (e.g., glass, silverware) is of high quality. [TAB 1]	.246	.808	.941								
	The table setting is visually attractive. [TAB 2]	.293	.808	.880								
	<i>Service Staff (STF)</i>				.803	.421	.821	.574	.721	.794	.428	.818
	Employees were kind and welcoming. [STF 1]	.215	.784	.909								
	Employees make me feel cared for. [STF 2]	.250	.738	.801								
Employees are neat and well-dressed. [STF 3]	.278	.764	.876									

Note(s). Fit indexes: $\chi^2 = 882.572$, $df = 143$, $\chi^2/df = 6.17$, Robust CFI = 0.940, Robust TLI = 0.923, Robust RMSEA = 0.062, SRMR (individual level) = 0.050, SRMR (restaurant level) = 0.071. SL W denotes standardised loadings at the individual level, while SL B indicates them at the restaurant level.

matrix) = 0.051, SRMR (restaurant level covariance matrix) = 0.061. Finally, the relationships between the servicescape constructs and TripAdvisor ratings at the restaurant level unveiled several significant findings (Table 3). Notably, the atmosphere rating (TA_ATM) exhibited significant positive associations with AES (Std. Est. = 0.312, $p < 0.05$) and AMB (Std. Est. = 0.367, $p < 0.01$), thereby supporting H1a and H1b, respectively. Conversely, the relationships with LTE, TAB, and STF were non-significant,

Table 3. Estimated model coefficients at the restaurant (between) level.

	Structural path	Std. Est.	SE.	T	p.	Decision
<i>TripAdvisor atmosphere rating (TA_ATM)</i>						
H1a	TA_ATM → AES	.312	.092	2.454	<.05	Support
H1b	TA_ATM → AMB	.367	.112	3.005	<.01	Support
H1c	TA_ATM → LTE	.197	.064	1.490	.136	Reject
H1d	TA_ATM → TAB	.115	.081	.773	.440	Reject
H1e	TA_ATM → STF	−.023	.067	−.343	.732	Reject
<i>TripAdvisor value rating (TA_VAL)</i>						
H2a	TA_VAL → AES	−.239	.081	−2.328	<.05	Reject (Opposite)
H2b	TA_VAL → AMB	−.244	.098	−2.463	<.05	Reject (Opposite)
H2c	TA_VAL → LTE	−.174	.058	−1.557	.119	Reject
H2d	TA_VAL → TAB	−.200	.063	−1.890	.059	Reject
H2e	TA_VAL → STF	−.083	.054	−1.533	.125	Reject
<i>TripAdvisor service rating (TA_SER)</i>						
H3a	TA_SER → AES	.297	.095	2.452	<.05	Support
H3b	TA_SER → AMB	.392	.115	3.408	<.01	Support
H3c	TA_SER → LTE	.248	.063	2.059	<.05	Support
H3d	TA_SER → TAB	.337	.069	2.919	<.01	Support
H3e	TA_SER → STF	.336	.063	2.659	<.01	Support
<i>TripAdvisor overall rating (TA_OS)</i>						
H4a	TA_OS → AES	−.154	.108	−1.104	.270	Reject
H4b	TA_OS → AMB	−.267	.136	−1.937	.053	Reject
H4c	TA_OS → LTE	−.068	.075	−.469	.639	Reject
H4d	TA_OS → TAB	.132	.099	.789	.430	Reject
H4e	TA_OS → STF	.300	.085	1.751	.080	Reject

Note(s). Fit indexes: $\chi^2 = 972.783$, $df = 179$, $\chi^2/df = 5.43$, Robust CFI = 0.939, Robust TLI = 0.919, Robust RMSEA = 0.056, SRMR (within) = 0.051, SRMR (between) = 0.061.

thereby rejecting H1c, H1d, and H1e. Unexpectedly, the TripAdvisor value rating (TA_VAL) showed significant negative relationships with the servicescape constructs of AES (Std. Est. = −0.239, $p < 0.05$) and AMB (Std. Est. = −0.244, $p < 0.05$). However, the relationships with the other constructs were non-significant. This evidence led to the rejection of hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, and H2e. Conversely, the TripAdvisor service rating (TA_SER) positively relates to all four constructs. This implies that, on average, restaurants with high service ratings on TripAdvisor received positive evaluations in terms of AES (Std. Est. = 0.297, $p < 0.05$), AMB (Std. Est. = 0.392, $p < 0.01$), LTE (Std. Est. = 0.248, $p < 0.05$), TAB (Std. Est. = 0.337; $p < 0.01$), and STF (Std. Est. = 0.336, $p < 0.01$). These findings confirmed H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, and H3e. To conclude, the TripAdvisor overall rating (TA_OS) did not demonstrate significant relationships with the servicescape constructs, leading to the rejection of hypotheses H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d, and H4e.

6. Discussion

Framed within leisure studies, these findings shed light on how leisure dining experiences are cognitively evaluated and socially communicated through digital platforms. Rather than treating online ratings as purely informational artefacts, this study positions them as expressions of how individuals make sense of leisure practices that combine pleasure, sociability, and environmental immersion (Schuckert et al., 2016). This study offers empirical evidence of a significant correlation between specific TripAdvisor ratings and certain servicescape components in LDEs. It diverges from recent restaurant eWOM literature by integrating online review data with direct measurements, thus yielding more

generalisable findings and addressing the gap identified by previous research (Xiang et al., 2018; Yousaf & Kim, 2025).

We found that the TripAdvisor atmosphere rating is positively related to the servicescape's first-order constructs of facility aesthetics and ambience: an intuitive connection that provides evidence that clients may indeed evaluate both the aesthetics and other background elements when assessing a restaurant's atmosphere online. The importance of aesthetics and ambience corroborates previous findings from text-analysis-based research (Gruss et al., 2023; Poyoi et al., 2024). However, these studies do not differentiate between the two constructs, generally referring to ambience or atmosphere. Examining the meaning behind the TripAdvisor score allowed us to disentangle its elements, underscoring the significance of aesthetic appeal and dining comfort, including acoustic and olfactory stimuli.

Interestingly, the service rating (*i.e.*, TripAdvisor service) was positively related to all the servicescape constructs, affirming the centrality of this aspect (Gruss et al., 2023; Poyoi et al., 2024; Tian et al., 2021). This array of significant and positive relationships suggests that online reviewers may perceive the service rating as encompassing multiple dimensions, from the table's arrangement to the service staff's performance, as well as overall aesthetic and atmospheric features. Thus, the TripAdvisor service rating is not limited to evaluating service staff performance; it also accounts for the broader context of the LDE, including the tangible elements that constitute the environment and most intangibles – such as lighting and temperature – that shape ambience. From a leisure studies perspective, this supports the notion that service encounters in dining are inseparable from the broader experiential setting in which leisure unfolds, reinforcing the idea that leisure value emerges from the orchestration of space, time, and social interaction rather than from discrete service components.

Conversely, the overall rating on TripAdvisor showed only non-significant relationships with the servicescape constructs, suggesting a potential mismatch between the overall rating and the specific facets of the LDE encapsulated within those constructs. The algorithm driving the overall rating appears to diverge significantly from reviewers' evaluations of the LDE, providing evidence supporting Schuckert et al. (2016) thesis on the limitations of the overall rating. This finding aligns with critical leisure scholarship on the platformisation of leisure, suggesting that aggregated digital metrics may fail to capture the experiential richness and situational meanings that define leisure practices (Dunlap & Rose, 2025).

Another intriguing finding, contrary to our initial hypotheses, is the negative association observed between TripAdvisor value rating and the servicescape elements of facility aesthetics and ambience. This suggests that restaurants receiving high ratings in the value category may not perform as well in certain aspects of the LDE, particularly in the establishment's aesthetics and ambience. A similar result emerged in the study by Mathayomchan and Taecharungroj (2020), in which sentiment towards value negatively affected the likelihood that a restaurant received a 5-star rating. Several reasons may explain this counterintuitive outcome. First, in line with limited attention theory, people tend to underestimate the costs associated with the aesthetics and ambience dimensions, which, when incorporated into the bill's items, make the bill excessively expensive, distorting the perception of the experience's value (Li et al., 2022). On the other hand, given that price is a factor in the restaurant selection process, it is expected that,

regardless of service failures, it may exert less influence on the evaluation of LDE (Jeong & Jang, 2011). This finding is confirmed in text-analysis-based research (e.g., Barrera-Barrera, 2023) and questionnaire-based research (Hyun, 2010).

7. Implications

7.1. Theoretical implications

First, the findings reinforce the conceptualisation of dining out as a leisure practice shaped by experiential, environmental, and symbolic dimensions rather than by functional service attributes alone. Answering RQ1, the strong alignment between TripAdvisor ratings and specific servicescape elements – particularly facility aesthetics and ambience – demonstrates that evaluations of LDEs are grounded in how leisure spaces promote relaxation, comfort, and social interaction. This supports leisure scholarship that views food-related activities as forms of experiential leisure embedded in everyday routines and cultural meanings (Cleave, 2020; Karsten et al., 2015; Schmalz et al., 2020).

Second, the results contribute to theories of leisure evaluation and meaning-making by showing that online ratings act as cognitive summaries of complex leisure experiences. The TripAdvisor service rating, in particular, appears to serve as a holistic indicator that combines physical environments, staff behaviour, and ambient conditions into a single evaluative judgement, capturing feelings of relaxation and restoration, in line with Bhadauria et al. (2024). This finding aligns with recent research on cultural events, where not all leisure attributes were found to influence memorability equally: the qualities of the offering matter more than infrastructural or logistical aspects (Meeprom & Talawanich, 2026). By analogy, the present findings suggest that servicescape elements – which shape the qualitative, sensory character of the dining environment – play a key role in how leisure dining is remembered and evaluated online.

Third, the study advances leisure research by empirically confirming that numerical eWOM indicators serve as performance heuristics in leisure contexts, addressing RQ2. This is consistent with recent leisure scholarship demonstrating that memorable leisure experiences generate spillover effects beyond the event itself, shaping attitudes towards the leisure setting and driving word-of-mouth intentions (Chen & Girish, 2025). In the dining context, platform-generated ratings can be understood as a formalised expression of this same mechanism: they externalise and circulate the evaluative residue of memorable leisure experiences, functioning simultaneously as informational signals for prospective diners and as a form of digitally mediated word-of-mouth. Given that the textual component of reviews may be the most complex to interpret and is also more susceptible to potentially unreliable behaviours – a phenomenon that the use of AI could exacerbate (Salminen et al., 2022) – this research contributes to methodological debates in leisure studies about the use of digital trace data, providing a model for combining platform data with theory-driven measurement tools.

Fourth, the absence of significant relationships between servicescape dimensions and the TripAdvisor overall rating, as reported by Schuckert et al. (2016), has important theoretical implications. It suggests that aggregated platform metrics mask the experiential qualities essential to leisure practices. This finding warns against treating overall

ratings as neutral or comprehensive indicators of leisure quality. It supports critical leisure scholarship that examines how commercial platforms reshape the representation and valuation of leisure experiences (Dunlap & Rose, 2025).

Finally, through adopting a multi-level analytical approach, this study contributes to leisure theory by demonstrating that leisure experiences are both individual and collective phenomena. Evaluations of LDEs are influenced not only by personal perceptions but also by shared interpretations rooted in specific leisure settings. Recognising this nested structure enhances theoretical accuracy in studies of leisure spaces, servicescapes, and digitally mediated leisure consumption (Julian, 2001).

7.2. Managerial implications

Firstly, the results show that TripAdvisor's service rating is the most informative indicator of the overall LDE, as it reflects not only staff performance but also broader environmental and atmospheric qualities. Restaurant managers should therefore interpret this rating as a holistic signal representing the entire leisure setting, rather than focusing narrowly on front-of-house staff training. In practice, this means that investments in coherent servicescape design – integrating aesthetics, lighting, table settings, and staff presentation as a unified experiential package – are likely to yield improvements in perceived service quality and, consequently, in service-specific online ratings. Managers can use disaggregated TripAdvisor ratings (atmosphere, value, service) alongside internal guest feedback to diagnose specific weaknesses: for instance, consistently lower atmosphere scores combined with average service ratings may indicate issues with lighting, acoustics, or crowding rather than with staff behaviour, enabling more targeted and cost-effective interventions.

Secondly, the strong link between the atmosphere rating and facility aesthetics and ambience highlights the importance of designing restaurants as restorative leisure spaces. Managers should prioritise sensory comfort – including visual harmony, acoustic balance, and olfactory cues – to support the relaxation and sociability that customers seek during extended leisure dining occasions.

Thirdly, the negative relationship between the value rating and certain servicescape elements – specifically facility aesthetics and ambience – suggests a misalignment between experiential positioning and price perceptions. Restaurants pursuing an experiential or aesthetic differentiation strategy should ensure that their pricing logic and communication explicitly justify these investments. For example, menus, reservation systems, and social media content can be used to frame the setting's atmospheric and aesthetic qualities as part of the value proposition, helping customers incorporate these elements into their pre-visit expectations and post-visit evaluations. Conversely, establishments positioning themselves as value-oriented leisure spaces may benefit from emphasising conviviality and comfort over elaborate aesthetic investments, thereby avoiding the perception that décor costs are passed on to customers.

Finally, given the limited informational value of the overall TripAdvisor score, restaurant managers should actively encourage customers to consult and contribute to category-specific ratings – particularly the service score – when interpreting or leaving online reviews. This point is especially relevant today, as TripAdvisor has removed the disaggregated category ratings, leaving only the overall score and thereby depriving users of

the most informative dimension. Managers may partially compensate for this loss by prompting guests, through post-visit communications, to leave detailed written reviews that explicitly address service, atmosphere, and value as separate dimensions.

8. Limitations and future research trajectories

The present study is not without limitations. First, the empirical context is limited to Italy, where dining out is deeply embedded in cultural norms of sociability and conviviality. Despite the commonalities in the choice to eat out (Cunico, 2023), the meanings attributed to service elements and online ratings may differ across cultural or institutional contexts. Cross-national studies would help assess the transferability of these findings to leisure dining practices characterised by different social norms and expectations.

Second, the analysis focuses exclusively on leisure dining experiences, excluding other forms of eating out such as business meals or convenience-oriented consumption. Following studies on hotel and travel purposes (e.g. Xiang et al., 2018), future research could compare leisure and non-leisure dining contexts to examine whether the cognitive role of online ratings varies by eating motivation.

Third, although the study integrates survey data with platform ratings, it relies solely on numerical eWOM indicators, excluding the textual content of reviews. While this choice was theoretically motivated, future studies could combine validated measurement scales with qualitative or computational analysis of review texts to capture both evaluative heuristics and narrative meaning-making processes.

Fourth, the servicescape scale, while validated, primarily captures individual perceptions of the physical and social environment. Leisure dining experiences are often collective and relational, shaped by commensality and group dynamics. Incorporating explicitly social or collective constructs could further enhance understanding of how leisure experiences are evaluated and communicated online.

Finally, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Longitudinal research tracking changes in servicescape perceptions and online ratings over time would offer deeper insights into how leisure evaluations evolve and how reputational signals are formed and stabilised.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Paolo Cunico is a research fellow at the Venice School of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He holds a PhD in Managerial and Actuarial Sciences from the University of Udine. His research primarily focuses on consumer behaviour, with a particular emphasis on food consumption and the socio-cultural impact of overtourism. His work has been published in national and international, peer-reviewed journals and presented at international academic conferences.

Michela C. Mason is an Associate Professor of Business Administration at the University of Udine, Director of the inter-university Master's programme in Sport Management, and Director of the

FIGCx (Italian Football Federation) course for Sporting Directors. She conducts research in marketing and management, with a particular focus on the application of quantitative methodologies, and has authored numerous publications in both national and international journals.

Gioele Zamparo is a research fellow at the University of Udine in Italy, holding a PhD in managerial and actuarial sciences. His research primarily focuses on consumer behaviors and has been published in various international, peer-reviewed journals. He actively contributes to the academic community as a member of the Italian Society of Marketing.

Andrea Moretti is a Full Professor at the University of Udine in Italy. His research primarily focuses on consumer behavior and includes applied research across various industries, such as tourism. He also analyzes strategic and operational marketing issues, particularly in B2B contexts. His work has been published in various international, peer-reviewed journals. He is a member of the Italian Society of Marketing.

Data availability

The data supporting this study's findings are openly available on the Zenodo platform, with DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15181440.

Research ethics approval

The present study involved human participants. Hence, the research design, the questionnaire structure, including informed consent, and the data management plan were approved by the independent ethics committee of the University of Udine on 7 May 2025; the approval document is available upon request.

References

- Baginski, J., Sui, D., & Malecki, E. J. (2014). Exploring the intraurban digital divide using online restaurant reviews: A case study in Franklin County, Ohio. *Professional Geographer*, 66(3), 443–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2013.866431>
- Barrera-Barrera, R. (2023). Identifying the attributes of consumer experience in Michelin-starred restaurants: A text-mining analysis of online customer reviews. *British Food Journal*, 125(13), 579–598. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-05-2023-0408>
- Behera, R. K., Bala, P. K., Tata, S. V., & Rana, N. P. (2023). Retail atmospherics effect on store performance and personalised shopper behaviour: A cognitive computing approach. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 18(8), 1948–1977. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOEM-03-2021-0433>
- Beltramo, R., Bonadonna, A., Duglio, S., Peira, G., & Vesce, E. (2024). Local food heritage in a mountain tourism destination: Evidence from the Alagna Walser Green Paradise project. *British Food Journal*, 126(1), 309–326. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-12-2022-1136>
- Bhadoria, A., Bhatnagar, A., & Ghose, S. (2024). Do underlying physical specifications of a servicescape matter? The case of the cruise industry. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 45(3), 319–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332969.2024.2376806>
- Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600205>
- Björk, P., Kauppinen-Räsänen, H., & Sthapit, E. (2023). The impact of cruise ship dinescape on travellers' behaviour. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 18(2), 174–190. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-02-2022-0048>
- Castanho Silva, B., Bosancianu, C. M., & Littvay, L. (2020). *Multilevel structural equation modeling* (Vol. 179). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544323077>.

- Chen, C.-F., & Girish, V. G. (2025). How technology-enhanced experience affects festival host destination attitude and word-of-mouth? Evidence from Taiwan. *Leisure Studies*, 44(1), 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2023.2277716>
- Cleave, P. (2020). Food as a leisure pursuit, a United Kingdom perspective. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 23(4), 474–491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2019.1613669>
- Cunico, P. (2023). Why do we eat out? Evidence from a meta-analysis based on theory of planned behaviour. *Micro & Macro Marketing*, 3, 461–488. <https://doi.org/10.1431/108710>
- De Boer, M., McCarthy, M., Cowan, C., & Ryan, I. (2004). The influence of lifestyle characteristics and beliefs about convenience food on the demand for convenience foods in the Irish market. *Food Quality and Preference*, 15(2), 155–165. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0950-3293\(03\)00054-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0950-3293(03)00054-5)
- Dimitrovski, D., Starčević, S., & Marinković, V. (2024). Which attributes are the most important in the context of the slow food festival? *Leisure Sciences*, 46(3), 340–358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2021.1967234>
- Dunlap, R., & Rose, J. (2025). The gig Economy, alienation, and leisure. *Leisure Sciences*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2025.2573670>
- European Travel Commission. (2024). *Long-haul travel barometer 3/2024*. (No. 3; Long-haul Travel Barometer). https://etc-corporate.org/uploads/2024/10/ETC_Long-Haul_Travel_Barometer_3_2024.pdf
- Filieri, R., Acikgoz, F., Ndou, V., & Dwivedi, Y. (2021). Is tripadvisor still relevant? The influence of review credibility, review usefulness, and ease of use on consumers' continuance intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(1), 199–223. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2020-0402>
- Filieri, R., Lin, Z., Pino, G., Algezai, S., & Inversini, A. (2021). The role of visual cues in eWOM on consumers' behavioral intention and decisions. *Journal of Business Research*, 135, 663–675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.06.055>
- Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2014). E-wom and accommodation: An analysis of the factors that influence travelers' adoption of information from online reviews. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(1), 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513481274>
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Freire Varela, A. (2025). Eating the city: Socio-spatial analysis of the foodification process in the city of Naples (Italy). *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 39, 101130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2025.101130>
- Ganguly, B., Sengupta, P., & Biswas, B. (2024). What are the significant determinants of helpfulness of online review? An exploration across product types. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 78, 103748. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103748>
- Gigerenzer, G., & Gaissmaier, W. (2011). Heuristic decision making. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 62(1), 451–482. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120709-145346>
- Gómez-Corona, C., & Valentin, D. (2019). An experiential culture: A review on user, product, drinking and eating experiences in consumer research. *Food Research International*, 115, 328–337. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2018.11.035>
- Gruss, R., Quesenberry, J., Kim, E., Abrahams, A., & Ractham, P. (2023). How customer satisfaction drivers in online reviews of food trucks and quick service restaurants differ: Proposing the concept of anticipation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 109634802211430(7), 1238–1252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480221143042>
- Harrer, M., Cuijpers, P., Furukawa, T., & Ebert, D. (2021). *Doing meta-analysis with R: A hands-on guide* (1st ed.). Chapman and Hall/CRC. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003107347>
- Hox, J. J., Moerbeek, M., & van de Schoot, R. (2017). *Multilevel analysis: Techniques and applications* (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315650982>
- Hu, Z., Luo, J. M., Geng-Qing Chi, C., & Gursoy, D. (2024). Examination of experience attributes of parks in urban tourist destinations and their influence on visitor satisfaction: A topic modelling approach. *Leisure Studies*, 45(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2024.2392583>

- Hyun, S. S. (2010). Predictors of relationship quality and loyalty in the chain restaurant industry. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(2), 251–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965510363264>
- Iofrida, N., De Luca, A. I., Zanchini, R., D'Amico, M., Ferretti, M., Gulisano, G., & DiVita, G. (2022). Italians' behavior when dining out: Main drivers for restaurant selection and customers segmentation. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 28, 100518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2022.100518>
- Jang, S. (. & Namkung, Y. (2009). Perceived quality, emotions, and behavioral intentions: Application of an extended Mehrabian-Russell model to restaurants. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(4), 451–460. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.038>
- Jeong, E., & Jang, S. (. (2011). Restaurant experiences triggering positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) motivations. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 356–366. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.08.005>
- Jin, Y., Hanna, P., Eves, A., Jiang, Z., & Tang, T. (2023). Leisure eating practices and plate waste in China: The consumer perspective. *Leisure Studies*, 42(5), 788–803. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2125554>
- Julian, M. W. (2001). The consequences of ignoring multi-level data structures in nonhierarchical covariance modeling. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 8(3), 325–352. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328007sem0803_1
- Karsten, L., Kamphuis, A., & Remeijnse, C. (2015). 'Time-out' with the family: The shaping of family leisure in the new urban consumption spaces of cafes, bars and restaurants. *Leisure Studies*, 34(2), 166–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2013.845241>
- Kelly, J. R. (1972). Work and leisure: A simplified paradigm. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 4(1), 50–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1972.11970057>
- Kim, J., Lee, M., Kwon, W., Park, H., & Back, K. J. (2022). Why am I satisfied? See my reviews – price and location matter in the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 101, 101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103111>
- Kim, M., & Lee, G. (2022). The effect of servicescape on place attachment and experience evaluation: The importance of exoticism and authenticity in an ethnic restaurant. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 34(7), 2664–2683. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-07-2021-0929>
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., Makens, J. C., & Baloglu, S. (2017). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism* (7th edition, global ed.). Pearson.
- Lei, Z., Yin, D., Mitra, S., & Zhang, H. (2022). Swayed by the reviews: Disentangling the effects of average ratings and individual reviews in online word-of-mouth. *Production & Operations Management*, 31(6), 2393–2411. <https://doi.org/10.1111/poms.13695>
- Li, H., Liu, H., & Zhang, Z. (2020). Online persuasion of review emotional intensity: A text mining analysis of restaurant reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 89, 102558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102558>
- Li, S. N., Liu, Y., Dai, S., & Chen, M. (2022). A review of tourism and hospitality studies on behavioural economics. *Tourism Economics*, 28(3), 843–859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548166211060889>
- Lin, B., Wang, S., Fu, X., & Yi, X. (2023). Beyond local food consumption: The impact of local food consumption experience on cultural competence, eudaimonia and behavioral intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(1), 137–158. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-0099>
- Line, N. D., & Hanks, L. (2020). A holistic model of the servicescape in fast casual dining. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(1), 288–306. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-04-2019-0360>
- Liu, Y., & Jang, S. (. (2009). The effects of dining atmospherics: An extended Mehrabian-Russell model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(4), 494–503. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.01.002>
- Maas, C. J. M., & Hox, J. J. (2005). Sufficient sample sizes for multilevel modeling. *Methodology*, 1(3), 86–92. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-2241.1.3.86>

- Manimont, G., Memery, J., & Alahakoon, T. (2024). Food day-trippers' perceptions of regional food destination attractiveness: An application of distance decay theory. *Leisure Studies*, 45(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2024.2376824>
- Mathayomchan, B., & Taucharungroj, V. (2020). “How was your meal?” examining customer experience using Google maps reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, 102641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102641>
- Meeprom, S., & Talawanich, S. (2026). Memorable experiences and their influential factors: An importance-performance analysis of a cultural event. *Leisure Studies*, 45(1), 82–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2024.2376831>
- Menon, G., & Raghubir, P. (2003). Ease-of-retrieval as an automatic input in judgments: A mere-accessibility framework? *Journal of Consumer Research, Inc*, 30(2), 230–243. <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article/30/2/230/1831665>
- Motoyama, Y., & Usher, K. (2020). Restaurant reviews and neighborhood effects. *Papers in Applied Geography*, 6(4), 386–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23754931.2020.1791942>
- Nelson, V. (2021). Consuming local: Product, place, and experience in visitor reviews of urban Texas craft breweries. *Leisure Studies*, 40(4), 480–494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1831044>
- Parikh, A., Behnke, C., Vorvoreanu, M., Almanza, B., & Nelson, D. (2014). Motives for reading and articulating user-generated restaurant reviews on yelp.com. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 5(2), 160–176. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-04-2013-0011>
- Pavlidis, G., & Markantonatou, S. (2020). Gastronomic tourism in Greece and beyond: A thorough review. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 21, 100229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2020.100229>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Poppi, F. I. M., & Beccaria, F. (2022). Vinum regum: Classic themes in fine drinking stories. *Leisure Studies*, 41(5), 671–687. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.2022182>
- Poyoi, P., Gassiot-Melian, A., & Coromina, L. (2024). Local food experiences before and after COVID-19: A sentiment analysis of eWOM. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 477–493. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.29.4.1>
- Quang, T. D., Dang Vo, N. M., Van Nguyen, H., Thi Nguyen, Q. X., Ting, H., & Vo-Thanh, T. (2024). Understanding tourists' experiences at war heritage sites in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam: A netnographic analysis of TripAdvisor reviews. *Leisure Studies*, 43(4), 624–643. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2023.2249252>
- Ramos, R. F., Biscaia, R., Moro, S., & Kunkel, T. (2023). Understanding the importance of sport stadium visits to teams and cities through the eyes of online reviewers. *Leisure Studies*, 42(5), 693–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2131888>
- Rönkkö, M., & Cho, E. (2022). An updated guideline for assessing discriminant validity. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(1), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120968614>
- Ryu, J., & Heo, J. (2018). Relationships between leisure activity types and well-being in older adults. *Leisure Studies*, 37(3), 331–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2017.1370007>
- Ryu, K., & Jang, S. (. (2008). Dinescape: A scale for customers' perception of dining environments. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 11(1), 2–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020801926551>
- Ryu, K., Lee, H., & Gon Kim, W. (2012). The influence of the quality of the physical environment, food, and service on restaurant image, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(2), 200–223. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111211206141>
- Salminen, J., Kandpal, C., Kamel, A. M., Jung, S. G., & Jansen, B. J. (2022). Creating and detecting fake reviews of online products. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 64, 102771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102771>
- Sassatelli, R. (Ed.). (2019). *Italians and food*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15681-7>

- Saydam, M. B., & Altun, Ö. (2023). An analysis of British Michelin-starred restaurants: Guests' online reviews. *British Food Journal*, 125(11), 4214–4228. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-03-2023-0236>
- Schmalz, D. L., Joyner, L., Duffy, L. N., Bricker, K. S., & Blomquist, K. K. (2020). The cycle of food socialisation: Leisure as resistance. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 23(4), 510–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2019.1568891>
- Schuckert, M., Liu, X., & Law, R. (2016). Insights into suspicious online ratings: Direct evidence from TripAdvisor. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 21(3), 259–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2015.1029954>
- Şengül, S., Usta Dişsiz, S., & Uçkan Çakır, M. (2024). Over-gastronomy: Conceptualisation of the problems in gastronomy. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 28(20), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2024.2390675>
- Simon, H. A. (1957). Models of man: Social and rational. In *Mathematical essays on rational human behavior in society setting*. New York: Wiley 287.
- Tian, G., Lu, L., & McIntosh, C. (2021). What factors affect consumers' dining sentiments and their ratings: Evidence from restaurant online review data. *Food Quality and Preference*, 88, 104060. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2020.104060>
- Tombs, A., & McColl-Kennedy, J. R. (2003). Social-servicescape conceptual model. *Marketing Theory*, 3(4), 447–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593103040785>
- Ursu, R. M., Zhang, Q., & Honka, E. (2023). Search gaps and consumer fatigue. *Marketing Science*, 42(1), 110–136. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2022.1359>
- Vana, P., & Lambrecht, A. (2021). The effect of individual online reviews on purchase likelihood. *Marketing Science*, 40(4), 708–730. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2020.1278>
- Wakefield, K. L., & Blodgett, J. (2016). Retrospective: The importance of servicescapes in leisure service settings. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 30(7), 686–691. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-08-2016-0291>
- Wakefield, K. L., & Blodgett, J. G. (1994). The importance of servicescapes in leisure service settings. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 8(3), 66–76. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876049410065624>
- Warde, A., & Martens, L. (2000). *Eating out: Social differentiation, consumption, and pleasure*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wieseke, J., Lee, N., Broderick, A. J., Dawson, J. F., & Dick, R. V. (2008). Multi-level analyses in marketing research: Differentiating analytical outcomes. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 16(4), 321–340. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679160405>
- Wu, Y., Ngai, E. W. T., Wu, P., & Wu, C. (2020). Fake online reviews: Literature review, synthesis, and directions for future research. *Decision Support Systems*, 132, 132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2020.113280>
- Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., & Fan, W. (2018). Assessing reliability of social media data: Lessons from mining TripAdvisor hotel reviews. *Information Technology and Tourism*, 18(1–4), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-017-0098-z>
- Yang, T., Wu, J., & Zhang, J. (2024). Knowing how satisfied/dissatisfied is far from enough: A comprehensive customer satisfaction analysis framework based on hybrid text mining techniques. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 36(3), 873–892. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2022-1319>
- Yoon, Y., Kim, A. J., Kim, J., & Choi, J. (2019). The effects of eWOM characteristics on consumer ratings: Evidence from TripAdvisor.com. *International Journal of Advertising*, 38(5), 684–703. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2018.1541391>
- Yousaf, S., & Kim, J. M. (2025). How dark traits and regulatory focus manifest in online hotel reviews: A textual content analysis. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 34(2), 281–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2024.2422885>
- Zhang, H., Cole, S., Fan, X., & Cho, M. (2014). Do customers' intrinsic characteristics matter in their evaluations of a restaurant service? *Advances in Hospitality and Leisure*, 10, 173–197. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1745-354220140000010009>

- Zhang, R., Yu, Z., & Yao, W. (2024). Navigating the complexities of online opinion formation: An insight into consumer cognitive heuristics. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 81, 103966. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103966>
- Zhang, X., Zhang, X., Liang, S., Yang, Y., & Law, R. (2023). Infusing new insights: How do review novelty and inconsistency shape the usefulness of online travel reviews? *Tourism Management*, 96, 104703. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104703>