

**AN ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON GUESTS'
CHOICE OF FINE DINING RESTAURANTS IN SELECTED CITIES IN
KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Hospitality and Tourism Management of Murang'a
University of Technology**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented for a degree award in this or any other university.

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Murang'a University of Technology a thesis entitled **“An Assessment of Social Media Platforms on Guests' Choice of Fine Dining Restaurants in Selected Cities in Kenya.”**

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DEDICATION

To my late parents, who never lived to witness the desire of their hearts on matters of education. May their soul rest in eternal peace

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ABSTRACT

Despite the popularity of Social Media Platforms, limited data and studies have assessed the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. Fine dining restaurants are defined as exceptional restaurants from regular restaurants in terms of food, pricing, staff training, and level of service. The objective of this study was to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities. Four specific objectives of the study were formulated. The first objective was to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. The second objective was to assess the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors on Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. The third objective was to investigate the moderating influence of individual factors on Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. The fourth objective was to determine the joint influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. The Pragmatism philosophical stance influenced doing a mixed-method (concurrent nested/embedded) survey. The study was carried out in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities. These locations have the highest number of fine dining restaurants besides being a metropolitan tourist destination. Both Mombasa and Kisumu cities had four fine dining restaurants each and were included in the study. Nairobi city had 36 fine dining restaurants and a simple random sampling technique was used to select four study units. Data were collected using questionnaires from 307 guests and 36 managers. All the respondents were purposively sampled. A combination of scheduled online and physical interviews were conducted with the 36 managers. Four null hypotheses were formulated and either accepted or rejected at 0.05p-value with corresponding t-statistics at n-1 degree of freedom. To enhance the reliability and validity of the research instruments, piloting was done in similar study units but not included in the actual study. Ethical considerations were observed to protect the rights and confidentiality of the respondents. Qualitative data were organized into categories, themes, sub-themes, and concepts for interpretation. The qualitative results revealed the most popular Social Media Platforms. Further verified was the presence of influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants with about two-thirds of the guests, as middle-aged married men. The Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 22 to generate descriptive statistics, inferential, statistics, and regression analysis. Revealed were significant positive effects of Social Media Platforms on explained variations of about 32% on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. Also revealed were insignificant effects of social demographic factors on guests' use of Social Media Platforms to choose fine dining restaurants but significant positive effects of individual factors on guests' use of Social Media Platforms in the choice of fine dining restaurants. The study concluded that Social Media Platforms significantly influence guests' choice of fine-dining restaurants. Potential guests are likely to trust reviews and comments posted by previous customers to make decisions Managers and owners of fine dining restaurants should install infrastructure that enables guests to use Social Media Platforms. This study contributes to the understanding of theories of consumer behavior from the perspective of fine dining restaurants. Also provided is knowledge for sharing with stakeholders and for policy developments.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	:	Analysis of Variances
CST	:	Consumer Socialization Theory
DMOs	:	Destination Marketing Organizations
eWOM	:	Electronic Word of Mouth
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
IF	:	Individual Factors
ILO	:	International Labor Organization
KFM	:	Kenya Food Market
KIPPRA	:	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	:	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NRA	:	National Restaurant Association
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDFs	:	Social Demographic Factors
SMPs	:	Social Media Platforms
SNS	:	Social Network Sites
SRS	:	Social Review Sites
TCA	:	Thematic Content Analysis
TRA	:	Tourism Regulatory Authority
UGC	:	User-Generated Content
UNWTO	:	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VVIP	:	Very Very Important Person

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The evolution of the internet and more specifically Social Media Platforms (SMPs) pose distinct challenges for the restaurant industry as potential customers heavily rely on reviews and comments posted by previous guests (National Restaurant Association, 2019). While recognizing the complexities and ambiguities surrounding reviews and ratings on Social Media Platforms, it continues to be the most powerful promotional tool (Fortis, 2015). According to Cheng, Bilgihan and Kandampully, (2015), SMPs have been cited to influence behavior intentions and decisions making processes. Also, were observed as socializing agents (*media effects*) in consumer behavior in various disciplines of research (Leung, 2013; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014; Inversini & Buhalis, 2014). Hence, the provision of high-quality services and products can act as a crucial success factor for customers' choice of dining needs as well as sales and marketing tools, for the establishment.

Restaurants are essential components of the service industry as they contribute to the hospitality and tourism economic activities of a country (Natalia, Eduard, Berta, & Estela, 2018), besides job creation and improving Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They also contribute to the choice of a holiday destination for some tourists (Marinkovic, Senic & Mimovic, 2015) and therefore the guests' overall satisfaction with restaurants (Sparks, Fungso & Bradley 2015). Different types of restaurants exist and they include casual dining restaurants, family-style restaurants, fast food restaurants, cafés, and fine-dining restaurants, all catering to different clientele (NRA, 2019).

Fine dining restaurants cater to upscale clientele and provide the highest quality of food, offering full service with high operating standards, high pricing levels, and the most refined ambiance and atmosphere (Amelia & Gargs, 2016). Fine dining restaurants are defined as exceptional restaurants from regular restaurants in terms of food, pricing, staff training and level of service, (Parpal 2014). Fine dining establishments are sometimes called white-tablecloth restaurants because they traditionally featured table service by servers. According to TripAdvisor (2020), fine dining restaurants are known to advance the dining concept in tourism destinations across the world. The tables were covered by white tablecloths which symbolize the experience. Sommelier Greg Frech at The Wine-Sellar & Brasserie in Sorrento Mesa, Mexico posits that,

“Nothing symbolizes fine dining like a white tablecloth. More than just a crisp fabric, the white tablecloth is a restaurant’s unstated contract with its clientele, a promise of elevated dishes, world-class wine lists and superior service”, (The San Diego Union-Tribune; October, 2016).

Also, on offer were wine lists, and sometimes sommeliers, to help guests with food and wine pairing. Fine dining etiquette required one to take small bites of food even if it takes a little longer, formal dress codes were strictly observed, among other table manners (NRA, 2019). While meals proceeded accordingly to drinks, appetizers, entrees, and desserts, these restaurants develop new menus and offer a selection of different menu items to increase customer frequency. According to Kleynhans & Roberson (2015), this is crucial to customers who search for quality and value for their money. Today’s fine dining has evolved into an elegant blend of cuisine and dining concepts, with the desire to embrace technology for acclaimed virtues and find

creative ways of reaching out to customers and expanding their customer base (NRA, 2019).

With the development of the automobile, the fine dining concept became popular in France before spreading to other European countries (Ahmet & Sehmus, 2021). In Europe, the Michelin Star ratings are recognized in fine dining restaurants, while in the United States of America, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) provides research and industry trends. These restaurants are evaluated for adherence to quality standards by the Michelin star rating guide annually, (NRA, 2019).

In South Africa, fine dining restaurants have varying variables that contribute to their selection (Koufie & Kesa, 2020). These variables include convenience, need to relax, repeat visits, celebration, business needs, social occasions, quality food, good service, good ambiance, quietness and recommendations from other visitors (Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2015). Other factors as cited by Shahzadi, Malik, Ahmad and Shabbir (2018) include food taste, quality of service, ambiance, high-end pricing, and environmental cleanliness.

The restaurant industry is largely fragmented, forming different types of establishments (Longart, 2015). These establishments are discussed later under different typologies. In Kenya, neither previous studies have attempted to define fine dining restaurants nor have the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) categorized them (Koigi, 2018). However, TripAdvisor, which is the world's largest online travel site, and is recognized by World Tourism Council (WWT), has attempted to classify fine dining restaurants across Kenya.

Conversely, a study by Hsu, Hsiao and Tsai (2018) compared the selection criteria by claiming that fine dining restaurants are more likely to attract hedonic customers who pay more attention to restaurant environments. The study also evaluated factors such as surroundings, customer turnover, location, price, quality of food, quality of service, and type of food in choosing a fine dining restaurant. However, new trends are shaping fine dining restaurants worldwide (NRA, 2019). They include a competitive business environment, tight labor marketing affecting employment, an increased number of consumers and technology innovations. On the other hand, the traditional cafés, casual eateries and fast-food restaurants offer very informal service, moderately priced menus, and a low-key atmosphere (NRA, 2019).

1.1.1 Development of the Restaurant Industry

The global market outlook for the restaurant industry is estimated to be over 3 trillion dollars, with the largest market being America, followed by Europe, Asia and Africa respectively (NRA, 2019). However, restaurant trends differ in dining needs, consumer behavior, and technology differ from country to country. For instance, in Australia, restaurants were perceived as essential to tourists' overall satisfaction with a destination (Sparks et al., 2015). Also, a study by Sparks, Bowen and Klag (2013) indicates that over 60 percent of respondents interviewed considered restaurants as necessary when selecting a holiday destination, spending between \$20 to \$50 per adult on dinner.

The characteristics of a restaurant also influence the consumers' choices (Leung, 2013). Among these characteristics are a menu-offering variety of dishes, attractive decor, and local food products. According to Akbar and Alaudeen (2012), consumers evaluate factors such as surroundings, customer turnover, location, price, quality of

food, quality of service, and type of food in choosing a restaurant. Confirming this, (Kafel & Sikora, 2013) found seven factors that cause consumers to choose a restaurant: food quality in the top rank, followed by cleanliness, service, value, menu variety, convenience, and atmosphere. Six key motivations for eating out were identified (Sparks et al., (2015), among them, are holidaying, health, experience, and social reasons, while relaxation emerged as the most important reason for dining. Another factor identified was a gender difference in choosing to eat out while on holiday, where women were more likely to indulge in the dining experience than men (Fortis, 2015).

Different types of restaurants exist worldwide (National Restaurant Association, 2019). The restaurant's decor and guests' dress code determine how casual or upscale an eatery is viewed. In addition, table service versus counter service and the attentiveness of the servers are also indicators. For example, fine dining has high-end decor, formal dress, full table service, and attentive servers (Ahmet and Sehmus, 2021). In contrast, casual restaurants have a relaxed atmosphere, casual dress, full table service, counter service, or less formal servers.

Previous studies have identified four main factors that guide the classification of restaurants (NRA, 2019) although other factors may have emerged due in recent times. The first factor was pricing. Different restaurants use price variations as a marketing strategy to segment and penetrate the market. The second factor was is food quality. Previous studies (Longart. 2017; Parpal, 2014,) established that quality food dictated food pricing, and therefore, managers could make it to fix pricing. The food quality also relates to the ingredients, where they are from, and how they are prepared. For example, a restaurant may solely utilize fresh, local, and organic ingredients. The third

factor was the type of food on the menu. Menus on a cuisine may be from a specific region, or they may solely feature innovations from the chef. Thus, restaurants can devise menus based on specific types of food, as pizzerias and steakhouses do, or according to diets such as vegans or ketogenic diets. According to NRA, (2019), some restaurants additionally feature highly aesthetic dishes with garnishes, whereas others utilize a more modest, simple presentation. Such restaurants may only serve food in disposable take-out items, and others serve the most refined dinnerware.

The fourth factor was branding. According to Kortler and Kelley (2015), branding gives meaning to a specific organization, company, product, or service to create or shape a brand in consumers' minds. Organizations use branding strategy to help people quickly identify and experience brands and choose the said product over the competitors by clarifying the differences. For the restaurants, it is possible to distinguish one restaurant from one another based on common categorization factors, and unique branding (NRA, 2019).

1.1.2 Restaurant Categories

It is a common practice that patrons of restaurants have a variety of items to select from in terms of their meals and drinks (NRA, 2019). Although most restaurants in Kenya are classified under the TRA regulations, (Kamau, 2017), there is an inconsistency in service standards (Oyoo, 2016).

Fine-dining restaurants are exceptional from regular restaurants in terms of everything they offer (Parpal, 2014). The main characteristics are a formal dress code, fine dining etiquette, high-end decor, and a formal atmosphere in these restaurants. Staff members are generally more attentive and follow certain etiquette for taking and serving meals.

Exotic menus or interesting dishes are offered while wines are usually served (NRA, 2019).

Another common type of restaurant is a casual dining establishment. According to NRA (2019) classifications, the ambiance in casual dining establishments varies greatly based on these restaurants' brands and intended customer base. Additionally, casual dining restaurants share similar qualities such as moderately priced menus, table service, low-key atmosphere, and unique décor.

Contemporary casual dining restaurants are typical walk-in restaurants nearly for everyone who can afford a decent meal (TRA, 2018). Thus, they are modern and trendy with a distinct brand, have eco-friendly protocols, serve unique healthy foods, and have a trendy atmosphere that emphasizes visuals, worthy decor, and food.

Another type of restaurant is the family-style restaurant (Ahmet & Sehmus, 2021). These restaurants only feature shareable platters and offer a family-style option along with the option for individual dishes. Food is served on large platters for parties to share, and table service, and guests, typically pass around the dishes and serve themselves.

Fast-casual restaurants are popular fast-food restaurants here in Kenya (Patel, 2019). They are not classified under the TRA but are licensed to operate. These restaurants cater to people looking for healthier quick bites than fast food. According to the Kenya food Market Report (2016), these establishments are more affordable than casual dining restaurants, although they have similar characteristics such as quality of food, and prices are usually higher than fast food but lower than casual dining. Also, offer counter service, casual, contemporary environment and décor.

Other typical restaurants that exist in urban towns are fast-food outlets (NRA, 2019). These restaurants offer quick service, have counter service or drive-thru, are usually a chain and serve standardized meals made of processed food, casual ambiance, food is served in disposable items, like plastic containers, paper food trays, and to-go bowls. The Cafes offer quick drinks such as coffee, chocolate, flavored teas, pastries, and small items for breakfast and lunch, having a casual and relaxed atmosphere (TRA, 2018). Previous studies (Arika, 2017; Alonso, 2013), have established that cafes offer ideal venues for guests to stay longer to relax or socialize. The food trucks and concession stands are known to operate similarly to cafes. They serve a small menu of a particular type of food such as hot dogs, ice cream, sandwiches, and smoothies. Accordingly, food trucks are usually outdoors at sporting events, fairs, or city streets (Koigi, 2018). The food here is partially or fully pre-made, etc.

Last in the restaurant categories are Pop-up restaurants and are common in Europe (NRA, 2019). These restaurants can be anything from a beer garden only open for the summer to a sit-down restaurant in an unconventional location that is briefly open for a month or two. They operate temporarily from a few hours to a few months; their locations vary from shipping containers and unused old buildings to outdoor spaces and rooftop gardens. Creative, contemporary concepts, such as counter service, food stand or food truck service, or full table service (Michelin guide, 2019).

1.1.3 Proliferation of Fine Dining Restaurants

Modern-day fine dining restaurants are traced back to the 18th Century during the French Revolution (NRA, 2019). According to these findings, Chefs from aristocratic households set the precedent of private dining, a la carte menus, and gourmet food,

marking the rise of fine dining. Guests did not have to take their meals at a common table, typical of taverns and roadside inns. Instead, they had private tables, held by reservations and thus fine dining concept.

The concept of fine dining has drastically changed in the global market, where traditional fine dining mainly was associated with French cuisine. Fine dining restaurants are one component that contributes to choosing a holiday destination for some tourists (Marinkovic, Senic & Mimovic, 2015), besides enhancing their overall satisfaction (Sparks, Fungso & Bradley 2015). According to Mhlanga and Tichaawa (2015), formal dining restaurants in South Africa hand variables such as convenience, relaxation, being there before, celebration, business needs, social occasion, quality food, good service, good ambiance, quietness and recommendations on the selection of restaurants.

In Kenya, Social Media Platforms are used in marketing strategies among fast-food restaurants (Kiiru 2018), while celebrity chefs are using similar applications to showcase their skills (Koigi, 2018). This is crucial to restaurateurs in understanding the mediating factors in selection criteria, as this information can guide marketing strategies ((Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012; Kleynhans & Roberson, 2015). Trends in consumer behavior on restaurants in the US (NRA, 2019) show that over 72% of global travelers search for their restaurants using smartphones, and over 45% dine out at least three times a week. In comparison, over 80% of Millennials want to know more about the process and origins of what they are eating. In terms of the use of technology, the restaurant industry has tended to be a slower adopter of technology as compared to other segments of the hospitality industry (Ho, 2022; Eleftherios, 2017). Although there have been some specific areas in which restaurants have made some

progress such as inventory management software, scheduling software, and point of sale (POS) technology (NRA, 2019; Oyoo, 2016). Another futile area where technology requires greater attention is during the customers' pre-purchasing stage. As cited by Pei-Hsun and Ching-shu, (2018), restaurant businesses compete not only in food and prices but also in service, especially accessible and high-quality service. According to Pei-Hsun and Ching-shu, (2018), consumers have different perceptions when they purchase restaurant deals using Social Media Platforms because restaurants' offers are intangible and perishable as compared to buying general goods. It, therefore, proposed that categorizing these customers who buy through online modes such as Social Media Platforms, can lay the foundation for developing effective communication channels with different potential groups of consumer segments.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social Media Platforms have become an important source of information. For instance, travelers can make travel decisions and share their experiences. However, potential consumers of fine dining restaurants are unable to make an informed decision due to enormous information that is unverified by service providers. Previous studies have confirmed that most fine dining restaurants attract customers through loyalty or repeat guests, and Social Media Platforms can mediate the selection process. By verifying information posts from previous customers on Social Media Platforms fine dining restaurants can increase their sales, and build brand loyalty and reputation. Equally, the use of Social Media Platforms in fine dining restaurants can enable guests to obtain preliminary information and subsequently memorable dining experiences. Previous studies have cited the development of new menus that offer a selection of different menu items (Mhlanga, Hattingh & Moolman, 2014), level of customer satisfaction (Kleynhans & Roberson, 2015), and quality of food on offer as the main

factors of influence. In other studies, for instance, Xiang et al., (2017; Leung, Law, Van-Hoof, and Buhalis, (2013), have cited the presence of social media as another attributes despite variations between restaurant outlets and dining occasions. Low uptake of Social Media Platforms is however evident in developing economies (Obiefula, 2017; Kimani, 2014) despite the popularity of these applications. Limited studies have also assessed the influence of Social Media Platforms or other moderating factors on guests' choice of fine-dining restaurants. Additionally, is scanty data on consumption patterns in countries such as Kenya (Wamuyu 2018). People weigh their options and make the choice they think will serve them best. How individuals decide what will serve them best is dependent on personal preferences, tastes, previous experience and knowledge. It is assumed that the restaurant industry should know what drives customers, their choices and how they process their decision to choose a specific fine dining establishment. Thus, for purposes of policies and practices, restaurateurs need to understand why and how customers participate in social media to improve customer experiences and leverage the power of social media in their favor. Importantly too, is the need for the government to identify infrastructural needs that support the use of Social Media Platforms in businesses. This study, therefore, endeavored to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This study addressed the following specific objectives;

- i. To assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- ii. To determine the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- iii. To investigate the moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- iv. To determine the joint influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** Social Media Platforms do not have any significant influence on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- H₀₂:** Socio-demographic factors do not have to moderate influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- H₀₃:** Individual factors do not have to moderate influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya

H₀₄: Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors do not have a joint influence on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya

1.5 Significance of the Study

There is scanty literature about Social Media Platforms in the restaurant industry. Also, about consumer behavior on choice and selection of fine dining restaurants. This study provides information to managers and owners of fine-dining restaurants. Therefore, enables them to adopt appropriate Social Media Platforms for their businesses. Equally, guests can post and read reviews and comments from previous customers hence making informed restaurant choices. Secondly, it assists managers in better understanding the spheres of customers' decision-making process regarding restaurant choice. Thirdly, the study contributes to scholarly knowledge, while established gaps open the door for further studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in selected cities in Kenya. These Cities have the most fine-dining restaurants (Appendix II) and cater to diverse guests (TripAdvisor, 2020). Additionally, these cities are recognized for both local and international tourism activities (TRA, 2018).

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Several shortcomings were noted in this study. One of the limitations was the lengthy time taken in data collection. This was due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that made the government impose a one-year restriction on movement from one city to another and the ability to organize face-to-face interviews. The outbreak of the

Delta variant in Kisumu City further delayed travel logistics to the region. Delayed travel negatively impacted data collections both in Mombasa and Kisumu Cities, hence interfering with the entire research time frame. However, the data collection schedule was extended. Additionally, some questionnaires were posted while interviews were, organized for online interviews with managers as well as the hiring of a Short Hand Typist (Research Assistant). The other challenge was the wide geographical region that this study had to cover. This impacted negatively the financial budget. Again, the study opted for online interviews. A major challenge exists in data collection among hospitality staff who are reluctant to share guests' information due to sensitivity and privacy. To overcome this, the researcher had to either take a meal in the restaurant alongside the guests or create a network with industry professionals to reach out to a particular study unit. The study collected high volumes of qualitative data that consumed a lot of time to analyze. This challenge was addressed this challenge by working on the data as soon as it was collected. The scarcity of research resources such as finances, writing materials, and travel restrictions was addressed by combining related activities or performing them simultaneously.

Lastly, were a few managers working at each study unit at any given time due to Covid 19 outbreak and the nature of operations of fine dining restaurants. Fine dining restaurants employ a maximum of two to three managers to manage. To overcome this, the study included other managers working in the Sales and Marketing departments. These managers directly interact with guests either during booking/reservations or when making payments.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study covered the following areas;

First, a good network with key stakeholders in certain areas helps a person to obtain the needed information. In this case, the researcher was able to achieve the study objectives with the assistance of these people. For instance, the Mombasa County labor office, where the officer facilitated me to access all the study units. Also accessing guests and hosting online interviews with managers. Second, the study was confined to assessing guests' use of Social Media Platforms in search of fine dining restaurants. Specifically, where the guests use their mobile phones as the tool for searching for their dining needs. Thus, the study findings are generalizable within these contexts.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

This study identified four sets of variables. The study postulated the choice process of fine dining restaurants and how it is moderated or not moderated by either of these factors. The independent variable consisted of different Social Media Platforms and within it were other study constructs such as platform users, usability merits and demerits of Social Media Platforms. The dependent variable comprises a fine-dining restaurant. Specifically, were the operational fine dining restaurants during the period of the study. The social demographic factors included in the study were age, income, occupation, family size, family cycle, family assets and education level, and the individual factors separately mediate the choice process and the expected satisfaction. The individual factors included attitude, personal values, individual needs, expectations, accompanying group/s, and mode of awareness. However, the study excluded environmental and political factors/constructs as seen in Figure 1.1.

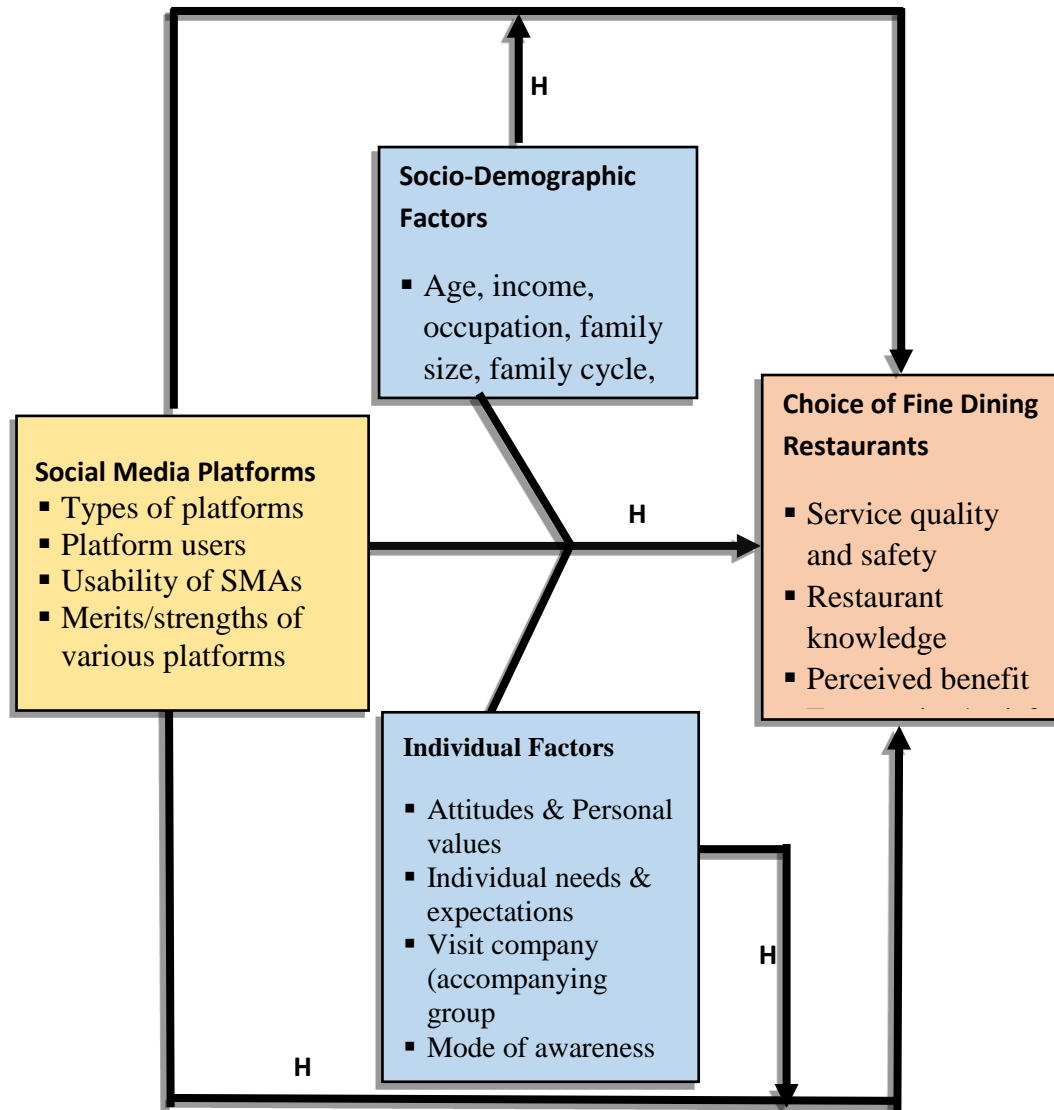


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Research Model of Study Constructs

1.10 Contributions of the Thesis

The contributions made by this study include the following:

- i. Given the verified presence of influence of Social Media Platforms on consumers of fine dining restaurants is great potential for communications, customer engagement and revenue generation to a business.
- ii. Enrichment of consumer behavior theories (Fishbein, & Ajzen (1975); Engel Kollat Blackwell (1968), in the restaurant industry.

- iii. The study confirmed the observable direct effects of social demographic factors on guests' decision-making.
- iv. Three papers have been published on the findings of this study.

1.11 Organization of the Thesis

Contents of this study are organized into five chapters as highlighted below:

The Chapter One is the Introduction. It discusses the Background of the Study, the Problem Statement, the Objectives of the Study, the Hypothesis of the Study, the Significance of the Study, the Scope of the Study, the Limitations of the Study, the Delimitations of the Study, the Conceptual Framework of the Study and finally the Contributions of the Study.

The next is Chapter Two, which presents the Literature Review. The chapter discusses the Study in detail on the related work done previously on Social Media Platforms and their influence on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants, the Consumer behavioral theories as applied in the service industry, the influence of social demographic factors on guests' decision making process on the choice of fine dining restaurants, influence of individual factors on guests' decision making process on the choice of fine dining restaurants and finally the composite of Social Media Platforms, social demographic and individual factors guests' decision making processes on the choice of fine dining restaurants

Chapter Three is Methodology. This chapter covers the research methodology pursued to achieve the objectives of this study. The research process of this study included the research philosophy, research design, Operationalization and Measurement of key study variables, location of the study, target population, sampling design and

procedures, pretesting of research instruments, measuring reliability, measuring validity, data collection process, tools and procedures, data analysis and presentation, empirical modeling, and finally ethical considerations of the study.

The fourth chapter presents the results and a discussion of the thesis findings. The chapter first makes an introduction, presents response rates of the respondents and their demographic attributes, analysis of objectives one, two, three and four are done in that order, then is regression analysis and testing of the null hypothesis of the study and finally a summary on either to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Chapter five covers the study findings, the conclusions made by the researcher, suggestions as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed related literature based on the four study objectives and the adopted theory. It begins by discussing the main adopted theory and is supported by four other theories. The chapter further discusses the development of the different types of Social Media Platforms and how they influence consumers' decision-making through online reviews, ratings, and comments. The chapter also reviews the relationship between restaurants' social media and guests' choice activities, as well as customer satisfaction. Lastly, the chapter summarizes the discussion and presents the identified research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Qualitative studies require a theoretical framework to provide a perspective or lens through which research constructs are observed, discussed, interpreted, or make predictions on a phenomenon. According to Creswell (2017), a theoretical framework provides a foundation or roadmap through which a study is conducted.

The study by Lepkowska and Parsons, (2019) asserted that there is a need for strategies for monitoring social media for small restaurants. This was based on their study that used resource-based view theory to explore the managerial side of monitoring social media in small restaurants. Most small restaurants underutilize social media as a monitoring device in their operations as seen in Figure 2.1.

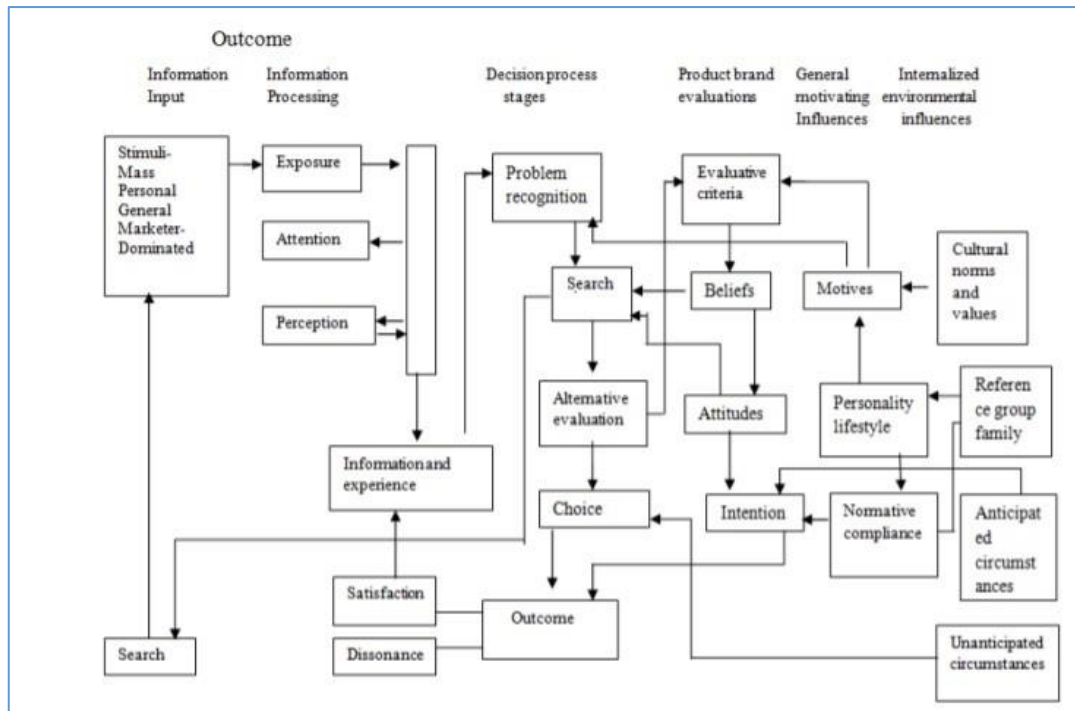


Figure: 2.1: Theoretical Model: Adopted from Engel Kollat Blackwell Model Theory

According to Lepkowska and Parsons, (2019), social media research related to restaurants has often emphasized how to implement social media as a promotional tool and communication device and has focused on larger, chain restaurants or the consumer perspective. There is a need to have a multidimensional model to assess or any other model. To underpin this study, Engel Kollat Blackwell (1968), was adopted. According to (Creswell, 2017), the purpose of a theory is to validate the entire research process. The Engel Kollat Blackwell model was first developed to describe the expansion and flourished knowledge concerning consumer behavior. This theory is one of the most popular models in studies of consumer behavior. The model consists of the main component of decision-making while discussing the relationship between them as shown in the Figure above. Accordingly, this study perceives the "search" construct from the model as the

The consumer behavior theory posits that consumers weigh options to make an informed decision. The theory further describes the seven steps that a person undertakes while making decisions. However, making such a decision requires appropriate information to derive satisfaction for instance in fine dining restaurants (Eleftherios, 2017). Empirical studies on users of Social Media Platforms to search for fine dining in China (Ho, 2022) revealed the enormous unverified information that is likely to affect their choice. Thus, the choice dilemma. Other theories key to this study on guests' choices are discussed below.

The first theory relates to the consumer behavior model as proposed by the Nicosia Model of Consumer behavior (1966). In today's businesses, the main point of focus has been the customers. For restaurants, five factors influence customers' selection process. It includes quality of foods, pricing, atmosphere, location, and level of services (NRA, 2019). However, modern consumers are keen on memorable experiences that accompany the dining process.

The consumer behavior model is a theoretical framework for explaining why and how customers make purchasing decisions (Fortis, 2015). Consumer behavior places more emphasis on consumers' attitudes which may be influenced in one way or another. According to (Fortis, 2015), different forms of influences impacts consumers and include experiences, knowledge, peers and social orientations. Recent studies (Karen, 2021), however, show that the invention of Social Media Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have been associated with behavior change among individuals. An example is how organizations are using consumer influencers such as celebrities to create content.

The second theory was borrowed from the Technology Adaption Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1986) to explain the utilization of technology. Some scholars have accepted the TAM theory for its explanation of the psychological process of information technology adoption while other studies have applied the TAM model theory in the hospitality industry. For instance, the hospitality studies that used the TAM model include Kiiru, (2018) who assessed Social Media Platforms in digital marketing in Kenya; Kim and Cichy, (2017) who studied private members' perception of social media across the USA while Nory, Borgman and Ebru, (2015) assessed the impact of social media on small businesses from a specific region in the USA. The model explains how users perceive Social Media Platforms in terms of beliefs, attitudes and intentions to use the technology. The current study used three constructs to explain the theory and included perceived ease of use, usefulness, and attitude towards using a system or technology in the context of fine dining restaurants. The theory presumes various factors that influence the consumer decision-making process. To underpin the research objectives, the TAM theory is aligned to assess how Social Media Platforms influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests. Under the review of consumer behavior is the premise that consumers undergo a process whenever they make a purchase, and it involves factors that influence their decision.

The theory further describes individual factors such as age, attitudes, expectations, values and needs. It discusses the social demographic factors such as age, income, occupation, family lifecycle, family size, savings, and possession that also influence the purchasing decision. Other external factors of influence are firms' financial performance, branding, location and reputation. A study by Shaker, Mostafa and Elseidi (2021) investigated consumer intention to follow online community advice on Facebook in search of customers' reviews and comments on restaurants applying the

technology acceptance model (TAM). The Previous studies (Wamba et al., 2017) have applied TEM theory to understand customers' attitudes about and behavior towards technology use and acceptance of online banking. It was also used in understanding the effects of restaurant satisfaction and knowledge-sharing motivation on eWOM intentions (Yang, 2017).

The third theory applied in this study is the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), by (Fishbein, & Ajzen, 1975). According to Fishbein, and Ajzen, peoples' actual behavior could be determined by considering their prior intention along with their attitude. In this study, social demographic factors are likely to predict how guests behave while in restaurants.

The fourth theory premised in this study is the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) proposed by Rogers (1962). The theory focuses on understanding how, why, and how innovative ideas and technologies spread in a social system. An example, in this case, is Social Media Platforms on how they have transformed all forms of communication in society. In the business world, enterprises incorporate social media technology in their operations and reach out to consumers. In this study, the researcher assumes that the type of information consumers have to make informed decisions often influences choices. One such influencer is the Social Media Platforms that affect their behavior change and intentions. By studying these constructs, the researcher established factors that influence social media uptake and its relationship with restaurants' social media activities. Also, guests' choice of fine dining restaurants and testing the null hypothesis.

2.3 Growth of Social Media Platforms

The rise of digital technologies such as social media has changed the way consumers communicate and socialize. Research confirms the role of social media as a new socialization agent influencing middle-aged consumer behavior (Leung, 2013, Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Social Media Platforms are defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User-Generated Content (UGC); (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2014).

The well-known types of social media are microblogs, social network sites and content communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2014). These Social Media Platforms have become both social and corporate for effective communication. The benefits associated with these Social Media Platforms include the ability to uncover industry trends in real-time, analyze business competition, better customer services through instant feedback, create accurate customer content, position a business over the competitor, and appeal to young socially-savvy customers. Among the disadvantages cited against the use of Social Media Platforms is the lack of emotional connection between a business and its customers, decreased face-to-face communication skills and the inability of the business to apportion revenues delivered from its usage (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

2.3.1 Classifications of Social Media Platforms (SMPs)

The classification proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) is the most recognized in the field of social media (Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) proposed a 3x2 scheme of classifying social media according to their level of self-presentation/self-disclosure (low–high) and their level of social presence/media

richness (low, medium, high). In their classification, Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) came up with six types of social media, which include blogs/microblogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities, and virtual game networks as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Classification of Social Media Platforms

Social media category	Description	Example
Blogs/micro-blogs	Websites that allow users to keep logs and share personal experiences and insights in a particular area	Tumblr Twitter
Virtual social worlds	Online applications that resemble the real world in a 3D environment and are represented by a customized human-like character; users can interact with each other in the virtual world	Active Worlds Second Life
Social networking sites	Focus on building relationships among people with similar interests and activities	Facebook MySpace
Collaborative projects	Sites where users interact with each other in the process of content collaboration; these sites help people manage and store collections of links and share bookmarks with others	Wikis Social bookmarking sites
Content communities	Designed for sharing of materials modified from pre-existing work, allowing users to add, modify or delete content in collaboration with others	Wikipedia YouTube
Virtual game networks	Computer-based online community environments are designed and shared by individuals so that they can interact with each other in this simulated world through text models	World of Warcraft
Social travel networks	Allow travelers to exchange tips with each other before, during and after a trip; also called online review sites	Trip Advisor

Source: Kaplan and Haenlein (2014); Alizadeh and Isa (2014)

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2014), User-Generated Content (UGC) comprises a variety of different types of content such as text, pictures, audio and video that are published, created outside professional routines and practices, and a rise from a certain amount of creative effort.

2.3.2 Microblogs

Blogs are the earliest form of social media that comprises special websites that usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order (OECD, 2013). They are the Social media equivalent of personal web pages and can come in a multitude of different variations, from personal diaries describing the author's life to summaries of all relevant information in one specific content area. According to Information Communication Technologies in Tourism (2016), the most popular micro-blogging services are Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. The micro-blogging service Twitter currently counts around 300 million monthly active users (Abouttwitter.com/company [July 6, 2015])

2.3.3 Social Network Sites (SNS)

Social Network Sites (SNS) are platforms or technologies that allow users to create profiles and articulate a list of connections (Akar and Topcu, 2011). The Social Networking Sites users' can virtually meet, connect and communicate with other users they may or may not know in the real world. As a smaller subset of social media, SNSs include sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and Micro-blogs among many others. Social network site such as Facebook currently counts around 940 million daily active users and 1.44 billion monthly active users (Newsroom.fb.com/company-info/ [July 6, 2015]). Current statistics on people having access to and using the internet in the world is approximately 5.25 billion (Broadbandsearch.net/July 2022). In their usage, a San

Francisco-based television allows users to create personalized television channels via which they can broadcast images from their webcam in real-time to other users. Nowadays, hotels work with bloggers either to update employees or entice customers and shareholders on developments they consider to be important (www.thetravelleaf.com/travel-blogging/2021).

2.3.4 Content Communities

The main objective of content communities is the sharing of media content between users (Fortis, 2015). Content communities exist for a wide range of different types, including texting on share-books, photos through flicker, videos through YouTube, and PowerPoint presentations through Slide-share. According to Kaplan and Haenlein, (2014), users on content communities are not required to create a personal profile page and if they do, these pages only contain basic information such as the date they joined the community and the number of videos shared. From a corporate view, content communities enable firms to entice consumers with attractive videos of their products and services. In 2017, Procter and Gamble organized a contest for its over-the-counter drug Pepto-Bismol, whereby users were encouraged to upload to YouTube 1-minute videos of themselves singing about the ailments Pepto-Bismol counteracts.

2.3.5 Assessment of Social Media Influences Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Social media impacts the motivation of a tourist and in turn influences tourist decision-making behavior (Bashir et al, 2022; Faizan, 2016). The various social networking sites, including Instagram, primarily influence the younger generation due to their predominant presence on the platforms. Influence is the ability to affect action.

Countless tools can be used to measure social media influences on the hospitality industry. Among the popular one is the measure of social traffics on users. According to Odoom (2017), measuring social traffic should not be confused with engagement. In his argument, Odoom (2017) comments that driving a reader to a website is a long way from having them interact in a meaningful way with a brand's content." Thus, two sets of activities should be viewed as separate entities. For example, a person could be motivated to search for a particular item of interest to him/her or interact with others as a way of socializing. Other examples indicate that consumers use social media pre-during-post travel to search for different information and suppliers generally use social media for promotion, communication, and management.

While this is true, Hawthorne (2014) asserts in the "Response Magazine" that "few organizations can comprehensively gauge the results of their social media efforts. For example, a good percent of companies is measuring the results of their social media content marketing programs down to the individual piece of content". According to Hawthorne (2014), measurements are mostly related to how engaged customers are on Social Media Platforms and not to the revenue these bring. Other scholars argue that social media content and its success is directly related to business gains such as using direct responses or downloads, while 31 percent make a connection to sales and revenues (Bee-lia et al, 2020).

According to Chiciudean (2019), it is crucial to measure the success of social media because it delivers information about the audience you are targeting and their purchasing behavior. He further argues that the true success of social media can be determined by the engagement observed such as evaluating the performance of a business by dividing net profit by net worth.

Regarding measuring tools of social media, Steine (2018), describes for example the total number of company or competitors' mentions, the total number of industry keyword mentions or the total number of visitors, average daily feed subscribers, and monthly blog readership as ways to go about it. The exact tools include Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, Post Rank, Tweet beep, and Feed Burner. According to Steine (2018), the graphical interface of social media provides an overview of engagement measures such as total likes, what people are talking about (posts they comment on and/or share) as well as details about your most popular posts". Being a smart technique, social media analytics is used to analyze tourists' attitudes or behavior. Increased recommendations about travel services and the purchase of an exclusive package help to understand the customer's attitude towards your brand (De lima, 2019).

Social media plays a significant role in many aspects of tourism (Faizan, 2016). More specifically, is the information search and decision-making behaviors, tourism promotion, and focusing on best practices for interacting with consumers. Also, leveraging social media to market tourism products has proven to be an excellent strategy (Chiciudean, 2019). Thus, tourism companies should know that this is a more powerful way of attracting new travelers than simple advertisements and encourage people to share their real experiences online. Social media sites allow prospective travelers to check other people's check-ins, photos, and feedback; with almost 20% using Pinterest and Twitter for travel inspiration (Data reportal, 2022). Social media has also made travel more spontaneous due to ongoing exposure to posts about a travel destination.

Recent studies opined that social media enables especially young people to share the most significant memories from their travels with a vast audience. According to Statista, 2017), about 36.5 percent of people use social media for travel inspiration and ideas while 60 percent share photos on social media while traveling. Each week, more than one million travel-related hashtags are searched, so whether we're planning to travel or vacationing, travel and social media are connected.

However, Facebook provides hospitality and tourism businesses with the travel opportunity to provide a booking within the site (Statista, 2017). For example, in the US, Delta Airline would take advantage of using Facebook also another opportunity for their fans and consumers in general to book.

The Advantages associated with Social Media Platforms or platforms include an easy way of doing online marketing, information spreads fast, continuous information sharing and helps in changing lifestyle habits (Data reportal, 2022). Key disadvantages of Social Media Platforms include a lack of emotional connection between individuals, decreased face-to-face communication, and diminished understanding and thoughtfulness among consumers.

2.4 Social Media Platforms in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Previous studies (Faizan,2018), largely focused on consumer reviews, reviewers' intentions, or readers' motivations to write online reviews, and more recently, influencers of consumers to follow online restaurant online communities. With the advent of internet technologies, travelers today have access to opinion-rich sites, such as social media sites, and can communicate directly with tourism organizations (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2013). An example of the latest trends is biometric (Recognition) technology. It is one of the most recent emerging tech trends in general,

but its potential uses in the hospitality industry are especially interesting. In particular, biometrics is being used to usher in a new age of seamless authentications, and this could benefit hotel processes and customer purchases.

Through social media sites, travelers can obtain information about a particular destination, whether good or bad, which can affect the success or failure of that tourism destination (De lima, 2019). Social media has made a huge impact on the tourism industry. Consumers engage with social networking sites to research trips, make informed decisions about their travels and share their personal experiences of a particular hotel, restaurant, or airline (Data reportal, 2022). For instance, Arika (2017) assessed social media marketing on the performance of the hospitality industry in Kenya. The study revealed the critical role of social networking sites in attracting customers in the MICE industry. Within the guest cycle, social media can support the decision-making and booking process, as travelers start by planning their trips using a search engine or looking on social media for travel inspiration, and also reading online reviews. Therefore, making social media an indispensable hotel marketing tool.

DiPietro, (2012) carried out a study on the use of Social Networking Sites in the Restaurant Industry's best practices in the USA. The study involved the analysis of data relevant to the use of social media sites with the largest chain restaurants and the managers' perceptions of the usefulness of such sites for their organization. The current research shows there are no consistent social networking sites restaurant chains use, there are no consistent uses for these sites, and managers have differing opinions about their overall usefulness in restaurant operations and marketing. Thus, more research should be conducted on the use of social networking in the restaurant and hospitality industry to determine the best practices for the future.

Social media offers a good platform for electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which has several advantages over traditional forms of marketing, namely speed, global reach and ease of use (Bronner & De Hoog, 2014). At the same time, hospitality operations are likely to face a lot of challenges while applying Social Media Platforms due to language barriers while communicating with consumers or ensuring up-to-date promotions for products and services, legal issues regarding privacy, and unwanted user-generated materials which might affect future organizational operations.

Due to identified immense benefits of social media, more tourism businesses are now using social media to market their products/services and to make personal conversations with customers (World Travel Market 2013 industry report). The 2010 survey conducted by World Travel Market revealed that two-thirds of tourism businesses in the world were planning to increase their social media marketing budget by 2022. Many tourism organizations are beginning to study and craft social media marketing strategies to their advantage (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013).

Different Social Media Platforms are used differently by each destination marketing organization (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). The findings established that although Facebook is primarily used by consumers for engagement, promotional activities were the highest use of Social Media Platforms by budget airlines while in the case of heritage hotels, Facebook is not the most informational (Yoo & Lee, 2015). Another study was conducted to review articles from the perspectives of tourism consumers as well as tourism suppliers (Islam, 2021). The study established that travelers use social media pre-during-post travel to search for different information while suppliers generally use social media for promotion, communication and in operational management.

Social Media sites allow prospective travelers to view other people's check-ins, photos, and feedback as reported on the use of Pinterest and Twitter for travel inspiration (Faizan, 2018). An annual report (TripAdvisor, 2020) established that social media has also made travel more spontaneous due to ongoing exposure to posts about a travel destination. Social media plays a significant role in many aspects of tourism, especially in information search and decision-making behaviors, tourism promotion, and focusing on best practices for interacting with consumers (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). For example, leveraging social media to market tourism products has proven to be an excellent strategy.

According to Becker et al, (2012), users can obtain useful information about an event on a single platform or consider exploring a variety of complimentary Social Media Platforms to supplement the information at different points in time. For example, Facebook may be used before an event for information on the date, time and location (TripAdvisor, 2020), Twitter may be used during the event to obtain real-time updates, and Facebook may be used again in post-event to view photos and videos (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). Thus, the scope and functionality of Social Media Platforms vary (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This may depend on the purpose of the organization's social media presence where the platforms implemented should reflect how consumers want to engage with the organization. For example, if consumers prefer to engage in real-time, the organization should use a platform that offers a presence or status indicator, such as Twitter (Kietzmann et. al, 2011).

On the other hand, social media has made a dramatic impact on the hospitality and tourism industry. For instance, is when potential tourists engage with social

networking sites to research trips to make informed decisions about their travel and thereafter share their personal experiences about a hotel at a particular destination. The dramatic development and use of Social Media Platforms have changed the way people engage with one another. A study by Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) on Social Media Platforms and networking revealed how consumers engage with sites for information search to make informed decisions about their travels. Through social media technologies and networking, information can reach a large population (Kim and Park, 2017). According to Munar and Jacobsen, (2014), the interactive potential of Social Media Platforms also enables the public to publish comments, opinions and appraisals about destinations, their services and their tourism enterprises. Various definitions have been used to describe social media technologies.

On the other hand, guests' turnover and business performance are dependent on such comments, reviews and ratings. Conversely, purchasing intangible services in fine dining restaurants cannot be evaluated before the experience and therefore pose challenges to service providers. According to Leung, Law, Van Hoof and Buhalis (2013), Social Media Platforms offer unique solutions to the problem of the intangibility of restaurant experiences. According to Choi and Thoeni (2015), firms use Social Media Platforms as strategic tools for interacting with customers and observing competitors' strengths and increase in market share. Also, to proactively respond to customers' inquiries, disseminate critical information, and enhance business image and relationships. Social media create an interface with consumers' desires for memorable meal experiences and influences their behavior (Mhlanga and Tichaawa, 2017).

According to Kaplan, 2014), Social Media Platforms are a group of collaborative online applications and technologies that enable participation, connectivity user-

generated content, sharing of information, and collaboration amongst a community of users. The well-known types of Social Media Platforms are microblogs, social network sites, and content communities. These technologies enable travelers to share their travel images, upload videos, write personal stories, provide reviews as well as publish updates about experiences. According to TripAdvisor's (2016) report on visitors' hotel reviews, official hotel classifications are often used by consumers as a filter mechanism in the hotel research and booking process, with guest reviews being used to make a final selection among a smaller group of hotels.

As a result, tourist destinations are currently using Social Media Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest to communicate with potential travelers or those planning to travel (Huertas and Marine-Roig, 2015). According to Lopez (2016), there are several factors determining the intention to use social media technologies. In the hospitality industry, Social Media Platforms are interactive tools that operate between customers and the service provider. For example, a study by Ali (2016) revealed that the quality of a hotel website influences customers' perceived flow and subsequently their satisfaction and purchase intention. In terms of usage, there are over 1.44 billion active monthly users of Facebook and about 200 million consumer reviews on TripAdvisor; the widely used and accepted consumer travel review site in the world (UNWTO 2016).

According to NRA (2019), about 80% of consumers in the US, search for restaurants through mobile apps and 75% make decisions from their search. According to Jumia report (2017), over 66% of the combined adult population of Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda were actively using mobile phone technologies to communicate. By providing easy-to-use and accessible applications to share their

experiences, restaurants have integrated Social Media Platforms for customers to write reviews and ratings (Longart, 2015). According to Song, Chung and Koo (2015), these reviews and ratings affect consumers' behavior intentions and decisions, which in turn influences firms' performance. In addition, the interactive potential of Social Media Platforms enables the public to publish comments, opinions and appraisals about destinations (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Previous studies on social media reviews and ratings (Marinkovic, Senic & Mimovic, 2015), have shown a relationship between usage, quality improvement and customer satisfaction. However, studies on consumer behavior demonstrated how customers or organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of ideas, goods, and services to satisfy their needs and wants (Woodside 2017). Hence, the actions of the consumers in the marketplace and the underlying motives for those actions.

In Turkey, restaurants were found to pay significant attention to TripAdvisor for various purposes (Ozygen & Kozak, 2015), while in South Africa, the use of Social Media Platforms increased tremendously where Instagram was leading, followed by YouTube, Twitter and Facebook in that hierarchy (World Wide Worx, 2016). According to Jumia Travel Guide (2016), Kenya had about 4.5 million users of Facebook, with the number expected to double by the year 2020. Currently, there are over 11 million active internet subscribers (Datareportal, 2022). Also, the Jumia Travel Guide Annual Report (2017) concurred with the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) on the increase of over 100% of Kenyans using the internet by 2020, hence greater expectations from travelers on using social media technologies. A study by Nendo (2017) further eludes the increase in internet consumption in Kenya, with about 22 million users across different Social Media Platforms. According to Kenya Food Market Report (2016) on restaurants, selected Cities have the highest number of

fine dining restaurants (Appendix II) and are a hub for regional and international fine restaurant businesses with diverse consumers and the highest population.

An analysis of the use of social media in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi was carried out by Oyoo. (2016). The study assessed the use of Social Media advertising to advance brand popularity. The study reported the rise of social media advertising and adoption to meet customers' expectations. Recommended on a better understanding of the utilization of Social Media Platforms across all levels of restaurants' operations. The findings recommended a study to investigate the utilization of Social Media Platforms by both the service provider and the consumers

According to Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) Report (2021), the larger hotel sector contributed over 10 % in the year 2017 to the Gross County Products (GCP) for Kwale, Mombasa, and Nairobi Counties. This was at a disaggregated level in both the National and County governments. Further on this, Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by nearly ten percent in the third quarter of 2021, compared to a contraction of over 2 % in the same quarter of 2020. It was further noted that the country's economy has been showing signs of recovery since the easing of containment measures implemented to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), KIPPRA report (2021). According to the KIPPRA Report, improved performances were observed in sectors such as accommodation and food service, manufacturing, education, and transportation and storage boosting the current overall GDP growth at the beginning of the year 2022.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the management of Wings Restaurant on 26th of October 2021 that "Nairobi remains an attractive market for food and drinks joints

despite the challenges that the restaurant and entertainment sector faced during the COVID-19 pandemic”. The management further eluded that Nairobi City alone for instance has the potential of having over 60 “WINGS restaurants”. Additional observations were noted from other branch managers of WINGS restaurants such as the following; *“There is so much potential despite the business challenges that came with Covid 19 restrictions. We all know how much Kenyans love new things and as WINGS, we have no problem trying anything new. And that means our work is to now have fun with our menus and develop unique flavors that focus on giving customers a fulfilling experience. The business changed, but smart people are still around. The pandemic did not change how we eat but how we get and enjoy food. People still love food and social gatherings,”* (Wings Restaurant Manager, 2021).

2.5 Objective I: Influence of Social Media Platforms in the Fine Dining Restaurants

Lack of adequate knowledge about how to use social media is a worldwide problem in the hospitality industry (Guarav, 2012). Although hoteliers have been reluctant in adopting new technologies (Leung et al., 2013), the advantages resulting from ICT developments have greatly affected the larger hospitality domain, both in terms of marketing possibilities and sales opportunities (Sergio et. al, 2020). The authors further elude that, technological innovations have become a prerequisite in the hospitality sector to compete and succeed in the market, although few studies have demonstrated its effects on the decision-making process.

It is not an overstatement to say that Social Media Platforms have completely reshaped the landscape of the hospitality industry (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). Due to social media, the sources customers use/trust to search for hotels, locate restaurants, place

orders make reservations, plan trips and share experiences have completely changed (Sigala et. al., 2012). It is further reported that 20 years ago, the first known Web purchase took place on a restaurant's website: pepperoni pizza with mushrooms and extra cheese from Pizza Hut (Parrish, 2014).

A case study of restaurants based in the Oulu region, Nigeria (Timilsina, 2017) assessed the impacts of social media on restaurant businesses. The study revealed that social media has a positive impact on the restaurant business. Additionally, were limitations on the small number of respondents and language barrier; recommendations for the future where more respondents are available. Consider a study on a larger geographical region with diverse social-demographic characteristics

Factors driving consumer restaurant choice, Duarte et al., (2013) carried out an exploratory study on the critical dimension of factors driving restaurant choice among consumers. The study revealed that food provided (quality, taste) was central to respondents' decision on restaurant choice while prior positive experience, a clean production/service environment, and hospitable service are additional factors that most strongly influenced restaurant choice. Thus, further studies are needed that include the presence of Social Media Platforms as a factor of influence

The importance of restaurants to the attractiveness of a destination (Sparks et. al, 2015) cannot be overemphasized. Consumers are increasingly interested in culinary experiences that include food, wine festivals and visits to wineries (World Travel Market Report, 2013) although Social Media Platforms are confirmed to have greater influences on younger people than the older populations. A content analysis on articles from both the consumers' and the suppliers' perspectives were reviewed and analyzed on all extant social media-related research articles published in academic journals

from 2007 to 2011, mainly in the tourism and hospitality fields, (Leung et al., 2013). The study found that consumer-centric studies generally focused on the use and impact of social media in the research phase of the travelers' travel planning process. Supplier-related studies have concentrated closely on promotion, management, and research functions, but few discussed product distributions. Thus, the verified presence of the influence of Social Media Platforms on the supplier-Consumer approach through social media research is still in its infancy (Leung et al., 2013).

A qualitative study on the Impact of Social Media Use on Consumers' Restaurant Consumption Experiences (Hwang, Eves, & Stienmetz, 2021) applied a face-to-face approach to examine how consumers' restaurant selection processes are performed with the utilization of social media on Smartphones. The findings showed that the adoption of social media on smartphones is positively related to consumers' gratification. The study suggested that consumers' restaurant decision-making process needs to be understood, as each stage of the decision-making process is not independent; all the stages of the restaurant selection process are organically connected and influence one another.

In Australia, restaurants were perceived as important to tourists' overall satisfaction with a destination (Sparks et. al, 2015). The recent developments in research into online information searches have also demonstrated that travelers spend time locating accurate information on the internet, checking different information providers before choosing the most appropriate product or service and eventually making their online reservations (Xiang et. al, 2017). This study further eludes that, the modern traveler is more conscious of the opportunities offered by the internet and therefore more exigent.

The study by Sparks et al (2015), posits six key motivations for eating out while on holiday. The relaxation aspect of the dining experience emerged as the most important reason for dining out with 75 percent of the respondent rating as very/ extremely important. Health, experience and social reason were perceived as similarly important aspects. About 55 percent of the respondents reported that eating healthy food while on holiday was very/ extremely important with only 11 percent indicating that eating healthily was not important. Similarly, 54 percent of the respondents viewed the restaurant experience as an essential part of the overall holiday experience and as providing an excellent opportunity to get together with friends and family. Finally, trying new, exciting and different foods (discovery aspect) and the opportunity to spoil oneself (indulgence aspect), were rated as very/extremely important reasons for eating out by about 50 percent of all respondents.

The gender difference was also identified as another reason for eating by consumers on holiday (Sparks et. al, 2015). For women, indulgence was observed clearly as a more important aspect of the dining experience than for men (mean = 4.26 and 3.84 respectively; $p < 0.05$). Similarly, relaxation and comfort were more critical for females than for male respondents (mean=5.29 and 4.65 respectively; $p < 0.05$), besides the revelation of more married men frequenting out than the women.

Consequently, consumer behavior literature agrees on information's role in consumer decision-making (Alonso et al., 2013). Quality information helps consumers access product quality, reduce purchase risk and increase the intention to purchase. Thus, researchers began to extend the information quality dimensions of social media such as believability, objectivity, reputation, sufficiency, timeliness, relevancy, understandability, completeness, accuracy, consistency and value-added (Akbar &

Alaudeen, 2012). For instance, Frey, (2018), found that information quality in e-WOM confirmed the positive influence of information. Social media was observed to have an impact on consumers' preferences and purchase intention among customers of restaurant products and services (Marinkovic et al., 2015).

In a related study that used structural equation modeling to study customers of fine dining restaurants in Brazil, De-lima et. al, (2019) verified the influence of presence on social media among the brand equity and image of companies and the purchase intention. This was on those customers who were found to be actively engaging on social media. Additionally, the key finding from the above study, was the positive and significant relationships between the construct presence on social media and perceived image, purchase intention, and brand equity as well as an indirect effect of media on purchase intention, mediated by perceived image (De-lima et. al, 2019).

Conversely, a similar study on social media usage among restaurant customers, (Ghiselli and Ma, 2015) found that over eighty-five percent of the total 254 participants used social media to search for a restaurant while over fifteen percent of them used social media to search for restaurant almost every day. Older participants were also less likely to use social media to search for restaurants as they trust friends' recommendations more.

Studies about Social Media Platforms and users' decisions on fine dining restaurants continue to elicit diverse views. This is due to the fragmentation of the sector (ILO, 2010), which results in the inability to define it (Malbasa, 2018), and the changing customers' choices and preferences. For example, Ahmet and Sehmus (2021), examined the impact of social media use on consumers' choice of restaurants and extracted four social media factors to measure and test the model. The study showed

that three social media use factors (searching for services, social interactions, and searching for products) influenced individuals' restaurant choices on the trip (more) and at home.

An attempt to measure social media engagement across different social networking sites (SNSs) and promotional activities for the casual-dining restaurant industry by Jun-Justin, Woo, and Hyung (2021) found social media engagement metrics are different across channels and promotional activities. Additionally, was a significant positive impact on a casual dining restaurant regarding financial performance. A quantitative study on the impact of social media marketing such as conversation, sharing, publishing, participation, visual and electronic Word of Mouth (eWoM), (Pattanacha, 2015) had significant results on the respondents' fine dining choice decision. The study concluded that conversations on social media and sharing information were the most impactful factors. However, other components of relative positive value in fine dining choice decision-making included location, parking and décor.

Similarly, Sergio et. al, (2020) attempted to verify if, in Europe, social media affects restaurant corporations' financial performance. The results demonstrated the positive effects of online reviews on financial performance and a heterogeneous relationship between both variables. A study to determine the influence of social media on customers' experiences in restaurants in South Africa (Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2017), concluded the significant role played by social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube in that order. A survey was conducted on purposively selected Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) within the hospitality sector in the Cape Metropole (Obiefula, Iwu & Haydam, 2017). The study sought to determine whether

social media marketing strategies are deployed to enhance the growth of restaurants. The sampled SMMEs revealed the use of Social Media Platforms and, more so, moderately effective marketing tools with WhatsApp leading, followed by Facebook and Twitter. Among the findings in the case study to assess the impact of social media on restaurant businesses around the Oulu region in Nigeria, Manoj (2017) found that social media provides a cheap and accessible marketing platform that instantly reaches thousands of customers.

There is the effect of printed materials and restaurant characteristics on consumers' choice of restaurant when on holiday. The study done by Sparks et al (2015) shows that almost 50 percent of the respondents interviewed reported themselves as being influenced by the various types of printed material in their choice of restaurant. Of the five types of print media, restaurant reviews in the region's local newspapers and advertisements in newspapers, magazines and dining-out guides were reported as exerting on respondents' restaurant choice (51.4 percent and 58.3 percent respectively). While around 40 percent of respondents reported themselves as being influenced by restaurant reviews in food guides and by references to the reputation of the chef in newspapers or magazines (38.4 percent and 41.2 percent respectively), more than half of all respondents expressed that these two-print media had no/little influence on their restaurant choice.

Restaurant reviews in food magazines were rated the least effects, among the five types of printed materials with only 31.1 percent of respondents expressing an influence on their selection process. Print media were found to exert a stronger effect on the selection of a restaurant for women than men. Restaurants' characteristics also influence the consumers' choice of restaurant. Among the reported characteristics

were a menu offering a variety of dishes, attractive decor, and the presence of local food products.

According to Koufie and Kesa (2020), Millennials' motivation for sharing restaurant dining social media and the most influential variable that shapes the purchase intentions and behavior of millennial consumers within the restaurant setting. These findings affirmed the impact of Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communication on purchasing intention and behavior of millennial consumers. Food and service quality were identified as the foremost motivation variables in the choice of restaurants. Social media presents phenomenal opportunities that should be harnessed. Also, a better understanding of consumer markets with a specific focus on e-WoM in the local restaurant industry. However, no research has been conducted to establish social media phenomenal opportunities in fine dining restaurants in Kenya and more so, need to include as a variable in the decision-making process.

Due to the fragmentation of the hospitality industry (ILO, 2010), research on Social Media Platforms and their use in Kenya's fine dining restaurants are not well documented. For example, Wakaba (2011) attempted to determine how social media marketing was used in small and medium hotels in Nairobi, Kenya. The study revealed minimal use of social media in hotel marketing activities. A case study was used (Oyoo, 2016) to analyze the extent of social media advertising to advance brand popularity among fine dining restaurants in Nairobi County. The study findings were that social media advertisements increased fine dining restaurants and a channel for meeting customers.

According to Nyanduko (2016), social media was found to be significantly crucial in creating brand awareness and improving brand image and brand loyalty among customers in three-star hotels in Nairobi County. A similar case study that sought to assess social media marketing on consumer brand loyalty among the Indian cuisine restaurants in Nairobi was done by Patel (2019). One of the findings in this study was that social media is an effective tool that creates brand awareness and facilitates interaction through communication that subsequently creates positive brand value in the decision-making process of the users. Based on the above discussions, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

H₀: Social Media Platforms do not significantly influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests.

2.6 Objective II: Moderating the influence of SDFs on Guests' use of SMPs in the choice of Fine Dining Restaurants

Previous studies have shown how social-demographic variables influence the selection of restaurants (Ahmet & Sehmus, 2021). A descriptive study that focused on the socio-demographic variables of men and women as a correlation to the adoption and use of social media in the informal sector in southwestern Nigeria used convenience sampling techniques (Oluwole, Olugbenga, & Niyi, 2021). The study, however, concluded that none of the socio-demographic variables have a direct correlation with the use of Social Media Platforms.

A cross-sectional survey (Osei & Abenyin 2016), applied the Engell–Kollat–Blackwell model to understand international tourists' use of social media for travel decisions to Ghana. The study revealed the use of social media for travel planning across all the stages in the decision-making process of tourists. Further on regression

analysis, the study revealed the use of social media at the evaluation and purchase stages that positively influenced tourists' decision to Ghana.

There exist many theories that describe consumer behavior across different settings of the provision of goods and services (Faizan, 2018). Studies on consumer behavior evolve around demographic variables including variables such as age, gender, income level, educational attainment, and marital status (Fortis, 2015). Each of these can have a strong influence on consumer behavior.

Among these theories is The Engel Kollat Blackwell (EKB) Model (Mweemba et. al, 2022). This theory is based on the premise of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). According to Mweemba et. al, (2022) the theory consists of a four-phase process that influences how consumers make purchasing decisions: input, processing information, decision stages, and variables in the decision-making process. The first phase has Input where the consumers take in the most marketing materials either through billboards, online advertisements, or in-person displays. It is argued that as data is collected in these materials, they graduate to information processing, during which they combine that input with experience and expectations to make the best decision for their current circumstances.

Rational insight leads them to the next step, which is where they make a purchasing decision based on the information they collected. While the decision process also has five phases: recognition of need, information searching, evaluating alternatives, purchasing (or choosing), and post-purchase outcomes (Islam, 2021). During the initial information stage of the EKB model of consumer behavior theory, input is the most valuable. Consumers receive enough information about the product or service to

easily recall or turn to the company’s products for future needs, and again during the external influence phase. The study by Islam, (2021) therefore concluded that the majority of service industries thrive on these dynamics to understand what triggers consumer desire to purchase a product or a service.

According to Kotler et al., (2014), the buyers' decision process is described through stimuli in the Buyer's black box: The box, comprises two sub-components, viz., the buyer’s characteristics and the buyer decision process as shown in Figure 2.2.

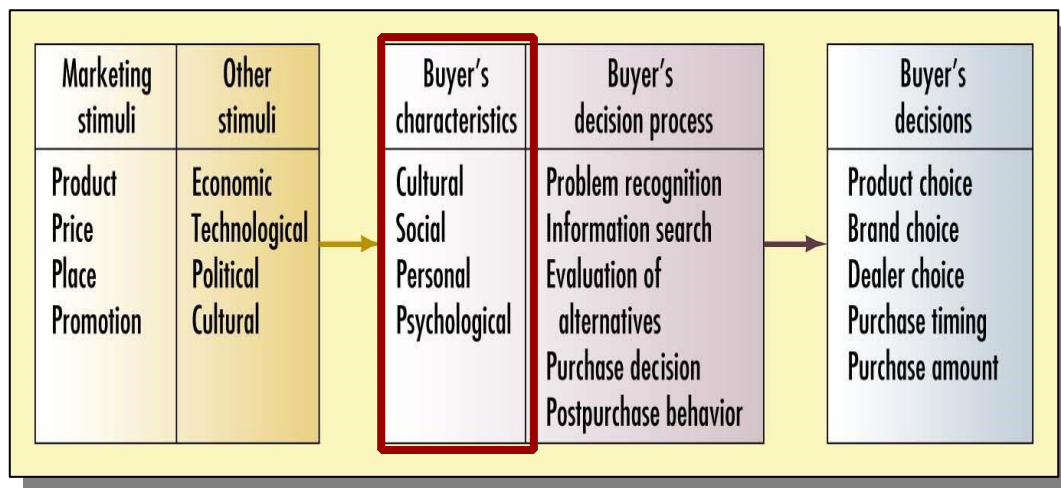


Figure 2.2: Model of Buyer Behavior Source: Kotler, P (2003)

From the consumers’ perspective, the buyers’ characteristics (Personal attributes) are the focal point while the other components of personal, psychological, cultural, and social factors are discussed in subsequent sections. According to Kotler et al., (2014), personal attributes that influence consumer behavior include -age and life-cycle stage, (family life cycle: single, newly married couples, etc.), occupation (occupation affects consumption patterns), economic situation, lifestyle (pattern of living as activities, Interest, Opinions),

Consumer theorists (Patel, 2019; Sujin & Myongjee, 2016) posit that personality impacts how they tend to think, feel and behave on an ongoing basis. Personality traits

are psychological characteristics that lead to relatively consistent patterns of behavior toward the environment. Personality traits are characteristic of enduring behavioral and emotional patterns, rather than isolated occurrences. Further to this self-concept is reflective of identity on how a person perceives him/herself in terms of attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. The consumer behavior theory further asserts that a buyer's preferred choice of brand is informed by motives that describe choices or courses of action or any decision mediators that match the motives with those alternatives. For example, is when a buyer contemplates either buying coffee in the morning or the evening (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013).

The theory of reasoned action (TRA or ToRA) aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action (Wamba et.al, 2015). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1967) consumers act on behaviors that they believe will create or receive a particular outcome, familiar or otherwise. As such, rational decision-making is the main attribute that drives consumers to make purchases.

Impulse buying behavior relates to positive emotions and feelings. According to Burton et al. (2018), impulse purchases occur when there is a sudden and strong emotional desire, which arises from a reactive behavior that is characterized by low cognitive control. Hawkins Stern Impulse buying puts its focus on impulse behavior. It's Steines's (2018) argument that the impulse to purchase was only one-half of average consumer behavior, fitting neatly beside tendencies toward more rational purchasing decisions. These impulse decisions are influenced mostly by external stimuli like walking past a convincing advertisement and possess a very little relationship to traditional decision-making habits.

According to (Steine, 2018), depending on the product, impulse buying represents between 40% and 80% of all purchases, according to various studies. Impulse buying exists on four levels of the Steine (2018) philosophy. The first level is the quick, pure impulse purchase, like making a last-minute purchase on the way out of a grocery or hardware store. The second level is known as the “reminded” impulse purchase, which makes associations between one product and another. For example, placing chips and salsa in the same aisle, so if you’re planning to buy one, you’re reminded you may want the other. The third level is the suggested impulse purchase, such as tacking on a warranty offer as you purchase electronics or power tools. The fourth level is the planned impulse decision, which is deliberate in that consumers know they want to buy a type of product but are not sure of the specifics (Steine, 2018).

The last theory of consumer behavior as discussed in this study is the Nicosia Model of Consumer Behavior (1966). The model suggests that messages from the firm (advertisements) first influence the predisposition of the consumer towards the product or service. Based on the situation, the consumer was observed to have a certain attitude toward the product (Wamba et. al, 2015). For instance, Chiciudean et al, (2019) established the restaurant market dominated by three segments of consumers, of which the largest is represented by “health seekers” in Romania. Also, a study by Karen (2021), on factors affecting consumers’ restaurant patronage decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic was based on socio-demographics and COVID-19 situational characteristics in the US. The study showed significant relationships between socio-demographic factors and perceived severity and/or vulnerability to COVID-19, along with concerns about coping with the virus for in-restaurant dining. There were greater concerns for those with lower education levels and those with more health concerns than their counterparts. A study by Ahmad, Ghazali and Othman,

(2015) found that seven social demographic factors were considered important by customers of casual dining restaurants in Malaysia.

Despite the increase in user benefits of Social Media Platforms, more than half the world's population remains offline (Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2015). According to Faizan (2016), Social Media Platforms have changed many operations in service industries. These include marketing strategies and policies for engaging consumers (Pantelidis, 2010). However, fine dining restaurants still lag in using Social Media Platforms as compared to other types of restaurants (Ahmet & Sehmus, 2021). This may be due to their formality in operations, reservation methods, and high levels of customer privacy.

Needles and Thompson (2013), assert that Social Media Platforms can influence all levels of Lavidge and Steiner's traditional Hierarchy of Effects model, from awareness to the purchase phase. The Hierarchy of Effects model presents six stages that a customer goes through, from first becoming aware of the product to making the purchase. Even after the purchase, reviews and comments can impact the consumer's fine dining experience. A study that investigated five basic emotions (joy, sadness, disgust, surprise, and anger) incorporated in online reviews of fine dining restaurants in Hong Kong (Munhyang & Seongseop 2021), revealed antecedents and consequences according to each emotion. These emotions were closely associated with service, food, and reputation and therefore need to understand them by analyzing big data.

Previous studies (Robert, et al, 2011) examined the relationship between restaurant attribute factors that included promotion, price/value, quality expectation, setting,

dietary, and variety/innovative characteristics as the dependent variable while gender, age, and dining frequency were the moderating variable. This study concluded with moderating effects of the relationship with these six factors.

According to Ryu, Lee and Gon (2012), service providers strive for customer satisfaction because of its impact on their performance and profits. On the other hand, Shabbir (2015) concurs that entrepreneurs use social media as a marketing tool because they can quickly build a network of supporters, which is vital for business growth. Conversely, customers in fine dining restaurants are striving for a new memorable experience that would make them come back for another visit or share their experiences with a friend (TripAdvisor, 2017). An exploratory study was conducted (Yaris & Aykol, 2021) that examined the impact of social media on consumers' restaurant choices and extracted four factors. This study showed that three social media use factors (searching for services, social interactions, and searching for products) influenced individuals' restaurant choices on the trip (more) and at home. Thus, restaurants should share the ambiance, foods, and menus on social platforms.

According to Jihwan (2015), tourists' behavioral intentions showed that Social Media Platforms have the most impact over other forms of media, followed by film, mobile phones, television, magazine, book, newspaper, and brochures. Restaurant reviews in food magazines were rated the least influential among the five types of printed materials, with only 31.1 percent of respondents expressing an influence on their selection process. Print media were found to exert a more substantial effect on the selection of a restaurant for women than men. Studies comparing Social Media Platforms with other forms of media (Dipitro et al., 2012) mainly focused on

restaurants within hotels, but limited exists about fine dining restaurants. Based on the above discussions, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

Ho: Socio-demographic factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests

2.7 Objective III: Moderating influence of Individual Factors on Guests' use of SMPs on the choice of Fine Dining Restaurants

Studies on consumer behavior assert that individuals make their choices based on their knowledge accuracy and therefore answer questions about how, when, why, where and what is purchased. The previous works of Kotler et. al, (2014) on buyer behavior have incorporated demographics or personal factors that influence the decision-making process. The study by Eleftherios and Barbara (2017), however, came up with a model that categorized four characteristics that included cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. The cultural characteristics include peoples' culture and sub-culture groupings, and social decision-making factors include reference groups, family, roles and social status. Personal factors included age, occupation, life cycle, economic, lifestyle, personality and self-concept, while psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitude. Studies on consumer behavior have listed five major factors that influence the behavior of a person (Kotler, et al, 2014). These factors include psychological factors, social factors, cultural factors, personal factors, and economic factors.

Psychological factors are the main determinants of consumer behavior. However, it is difficult to measure them but are key to influencing a person's behavior. For example,

are the motivation factors. The study by Kotler et. al, (2014) shows that, when a person is motivated enough, it influences his/her buying behavior. Aligned with this too, is Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Ho, 2022), five levels of needs and wants that person must fulfill before moving to the higher level of the pyramid. This pyramid has many needs such as social needs, basic needs, security needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. At the very bottom, are the basic needs and security needs that every human being struggles to achieve first. The basic needs and security needs have the power to motivate a consumer to buy products and services (Ho, 2022).

Consumer perception is another factor that influences consumer behavior. Studies of consumer behavior describe customer perception as a process where a customer collects information about a product and interprets the information to make a meaningful image of a particular product (Ho, 2022). For example, when a customer sees advertisements, promotions, customer reviews, social media feedback, etc. relating to a product, they develop an impression about the product. Hence consumer perception becomes a great influence on the buying decision of consumers.

Another example is when a person buys a product, he/she gets to learn something more about the product (Israeli, 2017). One has to learn how to use it. Learning comes over a while through experience. A consumer's learning depends on skills and knowledge. While skill can be gained through practice, knowledge can be acquired only through experience. According to Israeli (2017), learning can be either conditional or cognitive. In conditional learning the consumer is exposed to a situation repeatedly, thereby making a consumer develop knowledge of it. Whereas in cognitive

learning, the consumer will apply his knowledge and skills to find satisfaction and a solution from the product that he buys (Israeli, 2017).

Studies in consumer behavior further compare the attitudes and beliefs of the consumer. It is proven that people have certain attitudes and beliefs which influence the buying decisions of a consumer (Eleftherios & Barbara (2017). And based on this attitude, the consumer behaves in a particular way towards a product. This attitude plays a significant role in defining the brand image of a product. Hence, marketers try hard to understand the attitude of a consumer to design their marketing campaigns (Eleftherios & Barbara, 2017).

Previous studies relating to factors that influence individuals' choice of restaurants have been conducted. For example, Hemanthkumar and Nagendra (2016) conducted a study to identify factors that influence consumers in choosing a restaurant and investigate consumer preference and attitude toward a halal status that influences consumer needs in choosing a restaurant. The study suggests how intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence consumers to evaluate a restaurant. According to Pattanachai (2015), factors that affect consumers' fine dining choice decisions include the physical environment, style of food, variety of F&B, and service quality. A study on the factors influencing customers' impulse buying behavior in restaurants (Pei and Ching 2018) demonstrated reference group, social factors, and extraversion as the three major factors that affect customers' impulse buying behavior.

A study by Kim, Li and Brymer (2016), on the impact of social media online reviews on restaurant performance used the moderating role of an excellent certificate. However, little did it determine social media use and restaurants' financial

performances rather than showing positivity in the relationship. Managers, too, are unable to attribute the use of Social Media Platforms to the financial performance of their businesses (Kim et al., 2016). Therefore, this research attempts to use additional measuring tools such as guest counts, average checks, table turnover percentages, and the modified Rev-PAR to explain the financial performance of fine dining restaurants. Philips et al. (2016) used this model to explain the impact on hotel demand (Room Occupancy) and subsequently revenue (RevPAR) by visitors. The study showed the theoretical and managerial implications of these factors.

The Social Action Theory by Max Weber (1920) describes social action as a subjective form that a person can have in their way of thinking and acting and how these forms can influence the behavior of others, forming society as it relates and connects with others (Eleftherios & Barbara, 2017). The social factors describe humans as social beings and, they live around many people who influence their buying behavior. It is further argued that humans try to imitate one another and more so, wish to be socially accepted in society. Hence their buying behavior is influenced by those living around them. Examples of these social factors include family groupings. Other studies (Eleftherios & Barbara, 2017), show that family plays a significant role in shaping the buying behavior of a person.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as proposed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s describes the influence of individual experiences on the actions of others, and environmental factors. The study established that individuals' health behaviors and observational learning outcomes, positively impacted the desired behavior. Thus, a person develops preferences from his childhood by watching what, when, why, and

how family buy products and continues to buy the same products even when they grow up.

A similar study was conducted with reference groups. According to consumer behavior theory (Hyman 1942), five reference groups were identified that included Primary Groups, Secondary Groups, Aspirational groups, Dissociative groups, and Family groups. Generally speaking, a reference group is a group of people with whom a person associates himself. For example, school-going pupils or university students who try to associate with their groups who have common buying behavior and thus, influence each other.

Individual roles and status are other constructs that describe how a person is influenced by the role that he holds in society (Kotler et.al, 2014). For example, if a person is in a high position, his/her buying behavior will be influenced largely by his/her status. A corporate manager in a company is likely to buy according to his/her status while a junior employee of the same company will have a different buying pattern.

Cultural factors comprise a set of values and ideologies that belong to a particular community. According to Kotler et.al, (2014), the behavior of members of such a community is thus influenced by the culture relating to that social grouping. It is believed that cultural factors will have a strong influence on a person's buying behavior (. Examples of these cultural factors include the basic values, needs, wants, preferences, perceptions, and behaviors that are observed and learned by a consumer from their near family members and other important people around them. At the sub-culture level, there are smaller groups that share the same set of beliefs and values. It is further argued that subcultures establish and identify themselves as customer

segments and may consist of members from different religions, races, tribes, and nationalities.

Karl Marx's social theory of class distinguishes one class from another in terms of production and division of labor. And there exists a distinctive class system in every society. Accordingly, social classes are not only defined by income but include other factors such as occupation, family background, education, and residence location. Social class is important to predict consumer behavior (Kotler et. al, 2014).

Studies of consumer behavior further elude personal factors that influence a person's behavior. Among the key factors known to influence buying behavior is the age of the person (Eleftherios & Barbara, 2017). For example, the buying choices of young persons are likely to differ from that of older people, implying that older people have varying buying behavior.

The study by Kotler et. al, 2014), posits that people are normally engaged with it either for pleasure or as a form of making a living by earning from it. Whereas this is the case, the occupation of the consumer influences buying behavior. It is therefore argued that a person tends to buy items that are appropriate to this/her profession and thereby a person's lifestyle (Eleftherios & Barbara, 2017). Proponents of consumer behavior describe lifestyle as an attitude or a way in which an individual exists in society. It was found that buying behavior of the consumer is highly influenced by lifestyle. This further extends to items of interest to the buyer. Where a young person is likely to be interested in fancy clothing the older person's interests are properties and other items of future income (Islam, 2021).

The role of income of person dictates the ability to purchase and hence the buying behavior of a person (Inversini & Buhalis, 2014). It is argued that the higher income the greater the person's purchasing power. Further to this (Jihwan, 2015) asserts that the higher disposable income a person has the higher the likelihood to spend none basic items. Contrary to this, are the low-income people who are more concerned to obtain basic items such as food and shelter as cited in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Odoom, 2017). Previous studies in the US (Parpal, 2014), revealed that adults from higher-income households are more likely to be social media users. According to this study, 78% of US adults who earn more than \$75,000 per year are social media users, compared to 56% of adults who make less than \$30,000 per year.

The last facet of factors of influence the behavior of an individual is the economic factors (Kotler, et al, 2014). Studies on consumer behavior have shown the significance of the relationship between economic factors and behavior individual behavior. These factors have a bearing direct effects on significant influence on the buying decision of a consumer. An economic factor is a factor that can affect and influence an individual's financial status (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017). It is further argued that consumer buying behaviors and decisions greatly depend on the economic situation of a country or a market segment. For example, when a country is prosperous the economy becomes strong leading to more money supply in the market and higher purchasing power among the consumers. Thus, when consumers experience a positive economic environment, they are likely to spend more on buying goods and services (Woodside, 2017). On the contrary, when the weak are struggling and according (Woodside, 2017), the effects negatively impact the scarcity of resources of production leading to unemployment and reduced purchasing power. In terms of personal income, when an individual has more disposable income, the ability to

purchase becomes higher and thereby spend both on basic needs and wants (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017).

Economics defines family income as the total income from all the members of a family at a given time (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017). It was established that when more people are earning in the family, there is more income available to purchase both basic needs and luxurious items. A higher income in a family is likely to influence their buying behavior (Woodside, 2017). And marketers of goods and services have reported a trigger in more purchasing as a result of the introduction of credit cards (Kotler et. al, 2014). It was further revealed that owning a credit card was likely to entice an individual to spend even on credit on both basic needs and secondary items. Equally, consumers with cash monies are more likely to spend than those without and more particularly on secondary items (Kotler et. al, 2014).

Economists describe liquid cash as items that can easily be converted into cash such as investment shares, bank savings, and financial securities (Kotler et. al, 2014). Any form of savings is done when the consumers has disposable income. And disposable income is the money a consumer retains after meeting basic needs and instead of spending on secondary items, converts into savings (Kotler et. al, 2014). This study concluded that individual savings are more enhanced where economies can cater to the basic needs of their citizens. As compared to other continents such as Europe and Asia, the African region lags behind due to the poor political environment and economic policies (Wamuyu, 2018). Based on the above discussions, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

H₀: Individual factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

2.8 Objective IV: Co-joint influence of SMPs, SDFs and Individual Factors Guests' choice of Fine Dining Restaurants

Previous studies on hotels' website quality and customer satisfaction (Faizan, 2016, Wang et al, 2015) have confirmed influences of customers' perceived flow, which in turn influences their satisfaction and purchase intention, or the perceived flow, which mediates the relationships between hotel websites quality, customer satisfaction and purchase. Well-managed social media sites can create a virtual relationship with existing customers or convince a first-time guest to visit (Pantelidis, 2010).

Despite increased Social Media Platforms in service industries (Faizan, 2016), customers of hospitality products and services have different encounters due to perishability. A content analysis of 2,471 customer comments using a preference structure model regarding meal experience in fine dining restaurants (Pantelidis, 2010) cited favorable comments about food, service, ambiance, price, menu, and decor (in that order) when reflecting on their experiences. In terms of cuisine choice, a study by Marinkovic, Senic and Mimovic (2015) on factors affecting the choice and image of ethnic restaurants in Serbia showed that quality of food and price are the two most significant factors determining which restaurant to visit. On the other hand, interior decor ranked as the least important factor in consumers' intention to visit a restaurant. Based on the above discussions, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

H₀: Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors do not have a significant joint influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

2.9 Chapter Summary

From the preceding discussions, the evolution of Social Media Platforms continues to impact how organizations do their business (Ahmet & Sehmus, 2021). As reported from most of the reviewed studies within restaurant settings, Social Network Sites (SNS) emerged as the most popular Social Media Platforms in use. It included Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. These platforms enable the user to connect with friends, family, and brands (Gambetti & Han, 2022). They encourage knowledge-sharing and are all about personal, human-to-human interaction. Equally, the users can share thoughts, curate content, upload photos and videos, form groups based on interests, and participate in lively discussions (TripAdvisor, 2020).

The second group consists of Social Review Sites (SRS). Examples here include review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor. Reviewed literature revealed these platforms as the most preferred among tourists (Ghorbanzadeh et. al, 2022). These platforms display reviews from community members for all sorts of locations and experiences (TripAdvisor, 2020). The third group consists of Image Sharing Sites (IMS). Examples are Visual content such as images, infographics, and illustrations. According to Ghorbanzadeh et. al, (2022), it is worth noting that, Social Media Platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat are designed to amplify the power of image sharing. The fourth group consists of Video hosting sites such as YouTube. Also listed by TripAdvisor, (2020) is that, these sites enable one to bring together content and share it to a platform optimized for streaming.

The listing by TripAdvisor (2020), identifies the fifth group which consists of Community Blogs. Examples are Tumblr and Flickr. They enable the user to share the blogging platform by creating a space to express their thoughts and connect with readers. The sixth group consists of discussion sites such as Reddit and Quora. These sites are specifically designed to spark a conversation where users are free to ask a question or make a statement which in itself, attracts people with shared interests and curiosities. However, unlike Facebook and Instagram, users tend to give out less identifiable information (TripAdvisor, 2022). The last group consists of Sharing Economy Networks (SEN). Examples include Airbnb and Rover. The sharing economy networks allow users who have a common interest to share with other user users in the site community.

The frequency and levels of interaction affect both business growth and customer satisfaction. According to Chaang-Iuan et. al, (2022), fine dining restaurants are fast adopting Social Media Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to reach out to potential customers. Social Media Platforms are therefore impacting on decision-making journey of potential and thereby behavior change (Yang, 2017). The role of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of restaurants for dining purposes does not confine to a specific country but impacts any consumer in a travel-related business (Chaang-Iuan et. al, 2022). This implies that a social marketing strategy should be developed that is specific to each establishment's familiarity with social media and level of expertise in using these technologies (Fortis, 2015).

While restaurants play a pivotal role in guests' experience at a destination, extant information exists on the influence of social media on the choice of fine dining restaurants. Additionally, is a need for the evaluation of guests' use of Social Media

Platforms over the traditional forms of media of communication while searching for restaurant dining. Notwithstanding the advantages of Social Media Platforms over traditional forms of communication, other factors cause consumers to choose a restaurant. (Chaang-Iuan et. al, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, research variables, and location of the study, target population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, pre-testing of research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and data presentation techniques, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The philosophical approach to research eludes that, all research is based on assumptions about how the world is perceived and how we can best come to understand it (Creswell, 2017). According to Creswell (2017), the philosophical perspective of pragmatism has its roots in the Sceptics of ancient times. Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that considers words and thought as tools and instruments for prediction, problem-solving, and action, and rejects the idea that the function of thought is to describe, represent, or mirror reality. It is viewed as a philosophical way of dealing with problems or situations that focuses on practical approaches and solutions—ones that will work in practice, as opposed to being ideal in theory. Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed research methods, which "sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality" (Frey 2018). It is further argued that pragmatism is a problem-oriented philosophy and thereby taking the view that the best research methods effectively answer most of the research questions.

Although different types of pragmatism philosophic thinking exist, this study has used pragmatism as applied in social sciences. On a more philosophical level, mixed methods research combines paradigms, allowing investigation from both the inductive and deductive perspectives. Consequently, enabling researchers to combine theory generation and hypothesis testing within a single study (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011). Proponents of pragmatism, thus believe that most mixed methods research is underpinned using this worldview (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2021; Creswell, 2017); Maxcy, 2003). For instance, pragmatism supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative in the same study and rejects incompatibility. Pragmatic researchers consider the research questions to be more important than either the method or paradigm that underlies the method. As such, it dictates the research questions. Pragmatism, however, rejects the forced choice between postpositivism and constructivism about logic, and epistemology among others. This paradigm also propagates methodological decision that is dependent on the research questions and the stage of the study as well as being very practical and applicable.

Results from hypothesis testing are used to inform and advance concepts in social sciences. In this regard, generalizable inferences, replication of findings and/or controlled experimentation are key principles guiding a positivist. This paradigm enables a researcher to deduce facts and outcomes objectively and explain what and how actions, situations, and consequences are related.

3.3 Research Design

A mixed-method (concurrent nested/embedded) research design was used in this study. In a nested approach, the primary method guides the study while the second provides a supporting role in the procedure (Creswell, 2017). In this study, the

quantitative method guided the approach while the qualitative provided support for conducting interviews. According to Creswell, (2017), this design approach is integrated at the point of data analysis with either the qualitative or the quantitative being dominant. Both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and in parallel within the same study although the quantitative approach dominated the entire process and therefore the qualitative was embedded within.

To overcome a small number of manager respondents, the researcher referred to Creswell, (2017) where the study sample size is effectively determined by two factors: (1) the nature of the data analysis proposed and (2) the estimated response rate. Whereas 40 participants are an appropriate number for most quantitative studies, there are cases where the researcher can recruit fewer respondents as the rule of thumb. This study had a sample size of below 40 participants. However, this was sufficient at a 5% confidence level as argued by Altunışık et al., (2004).

3.4 Operationalization and Measurement of Key Study Variables

The dependent variable in this study was the choice of fine dining restaurants, while the independent variable was Social Media Platforms. Socio-demographic factors and individual factors were considered moderating variables as seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Operationalization and Measurement of Key Study Variables

Variable	Variable Type	Operationalization/ Indicators	Measurement in the Questionnaire	Supporting Literature
Social Media Platforms (SMPs)	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Types of platforms ▪ Platform uses ▪ Usability of SMPs ▪ Merits/strengths of platforms 	Questions 15-18	Pages 21-36
Socio-Demographic Factors	Moderating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age ▪ Income & Occupation ▪ Family size, cycle, assets ▪ Education level 	Questions 1-4	Pages 37-43
Individual Factors	Moderating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes and personal values ▪ Individual needs Mode of awareness ▪ Nature of visit company 	Questions 5-14	Pages 43-50
Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant	Dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service quality and safety ▪ Restaurant knowledge ▪ Perceived beliefs ▪ Expectations/satisfaction 	Questions 19; (1-29)	Pages 50-51

3.5 Location of the Study

This study was conducted in selected Cities. These locations were chosen because they have most of the popular fine dining restaurants, as cited in Appendix III (TripAdvisor, 2020; Kenya Food Market, 2016). Additionally, the locations are metropolitan cities with a diverse clientele from different socio-demographics as annexed in Appendix II (Urban Areas and Cities Amendment Act, 2011; GoK). In terms of ownership of the fine dining restaurants, they comprise both local and international brands and, therefore, varying nature of operations.

3.6 Target Population

A population is a group of people, objects, or items with some common observable characteristic(s) that can be investigated by a researcher (Kothari & Garg, 2014). For

this study, the target population included both staff working in fine dining restaurants and guests visiting the restaurants in selected Cities. Staff respondents included all managers and two representatives from the sales and marketing department in these fine dining restaurants.

3.7 Sampling Design and Sampling Procedure

Although the sampling framework in Appendix III has listed a total number of 36 fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, 19 had closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Four study units were randomly sampled from Nairobi City. This was a representation of 24% of all fine dining restaurants that were operational in Nairobi City. According to Kothari and Garg (2014), about 20% of the study subjects are ideal in smaller populations. In Mombasa City, four fine dining restaurants were purposively identified and included in the study. In Kisumu City, three fine dining restaurants were equally purposively identified and included in the study. The distribution of the sampled fine-dining restaurants is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Sampled Restaurants

Study location	No. of Restaurants
Nairobi City	4 (20% of 17 study units = 3.4; thus 4 units)
Mombasa City	4
Kisumu City	3

3.7.1 Sampling of Restaurant Managers and Sales and Marketing Managers

Two managers and two Sales and Marketing managers were purposively selected from each of the 11 studied restaurants. The purposive sampling technique is a non-probability sampling technique where characteristics are defined for the study. In this technique, results can be considered indicative and therefore replication within other

populations or conditions helps to define the parameters of the phenomenon. It included managers in the fine dining restaurants as well as those in the sales and marketing departments. These managers were selected as they are directly involved in the management and general operations of the restaurants. This category of respondents is well-informed on issues and factors that attract customers to fine dining restaurants.

3.7.2 Sampling of Guests

Since the number of guests who visit these restaurants is infinite, Cochran's formula (1977) was considered appropriate to establish a sample size for the guests. In this study, the characteristic of interest was choosing to dine at a particular restaurant due to the use of Social Media Platforms. The likelihood of making such an observation was taken to be 0.5. Cochran's formula for sample size in an infinite population is expressed as

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

n = desired sample size when the target population

z = standardized normal deviations at a confidence level of 95%, which is 1.96.

p = probability of observing the characteristic of interest

d = margin of error (level of precision) of 0.05

Now using values for these unknowns, the sample size was computed as follows

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 385$$

When distributed equally in the 11 restaurants, an estimated 35 guests were to be sampled in each restaurant. The respondents were purposively sampled and included in the study as they became available.

3.8 Pretesting of Research Instruments

Before data collection, research instruments were pre-tested. Pre-testing involved identifying any problems with the research instruments, such as unclear wording, which could result in misinterpretations of questions in the questionnaire (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Pre-testing was done on a small sample of respondents selected from two similar units but excluded from the main study. It involved four managers, four supervisors and ten guests purposively selected to fill out their respective questionnaires. Once the respondents filled the questionnaires, they were analyzed, revised accordingly and later administered during the actual study.

One of the problems noted was the use of a voice recorder due to the outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic. Managers were uncomfortable with the use of this instrument particularly with the outbreak of the Delta variant, at the time of data collection. However, control measures were taken by having questionnaires sanitized by keeping them in a box untouched for seven (7) days before and after filling them.

3.9 Measuring Reliability

Reliability is a measure of internal consistency and replicability of observations over time. It is the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors (Kothari & Garg, 2014). The more measurement errors occur, the less reliable the test is. Reliability answers to how far the same test would produce the same results when administered to different respondents under similar conditions. This was achieved before the administration of the research tools.

Test-retest was used to calculate the standard error of instruments and correlation coefficients. In this case, questionnaires were initially administered to non-sampled individuals. This allowed the calculation of reliability coefficients, which vary between 0 and 1. On the scale, a correlation of 0.9 (90%) indicated a high correlation (good reliability) and a value of 0.1 (10%), indicated a very low correlation (poor reliability).

The findings are preceded by reporting on response rates and the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The reliability of a research instrument measures the extent to which the instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Garson, 2012). To establish the reliability and validity of research instruments, Cronbach's alpha score was determined. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), Cronbach's alpha, with an acceptable level, ranges from 0.70 to 0.95. Cronbach's alpha for each study variable was as shown in Table 3.3.

From this study, the reliability coefficient for all the study variables was 0.823 (close to 1), implying the extent of internal consistency. Content Validity was confirmed by the total number of fully completed questionnaires. In this case, only six (6) questionnaires were incomplete which represents less than 1 %.

Table 3.3: Reliability of Research Instruments

Questionnaire Section	No. of Questionnaire Items	Alpha Score (α)
Social Media Platforms	7	0.779
Social Demographic Factors	5	0.815
Individual Factors	6	0.851
Fine Dining Restaurant	29	0.839
Overall	47	0.823

3.10 Measuring Validity

Validity is the degree to which research instruments measure what it intends to measure while representing all facets of a given construct (Given, 2017). This study considered four different measures of validity. Face validity was achieved by discussing study constructs or intended answers with respondents during the pre-testing of the questionnaire or interview. Construct or Content validity was achieved by discussing study constructs with the managers and information technology experts to allow any change to the instruments. It further allowed standardizing questionnaires on all aspects of measurements without overlooking any of them. To strengthen external validity, inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to define the target population. This was achieved by including the specific fine dining restaurants and respondents present in the study units. The main purpose of inclusion and exclusion criteria is to allow replication of a similar study using different samples and locations for comparison.

3.11 Data Collection Process, Tools, and Procedures

The data was collected between July and September 2021. Before the collection of data from the field, the researcher applied for a research permit from the National

Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The application was done through the Directorate of Post-graduate studies of the Murang'a University of Technology and the Ministry of Higher Education. Additionally, the respondents signed the informal consent letter (Appendix V) and the cover letter from the researcher (Appendix VI). Before fieldwork activities, the three assistants were trained by the researcher. Among the key areas of training included approaches to self-introduction at a study unit (personal etiquette), appropriate communication skills, personal grooming, and protocols of the Ministry of Health against the protection of Covid 19 infection among other things.

3.11.1 Administration of Questionnaires

The study used questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaires consisted of questions that respondents had to answer for study objectives. Printed questionnaires (Appendices Ia, & Ib), were used to collect data from both two categories of respondents. The questionnaires were self-administered and used for obtaining information from the respondents, as per the study objectives. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), one strength of self-administered questionnaires is their lower cost compared to other data collection methods.

The construction of good questionnaires is crucial for the success of a survey, and thus inappropriate question items that are confusing and incorrect make the survey valueless (Menter et al., 2011). Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in this study. Open-ended questions allowed the respondents to explain their responses as possible, whereas closed-ended questions required direct and restrained responses (Menter et al., 2011).

With the help of three research assistants, the researcher was able to distribute the questionnaires to the study units in selected cities. Each research assistant was assigned a region to distribute the questionnaires. It took three months to have all the questionnaires filled out. Peak days when the highest number of questionnaires were filled were Wednesdays and weekends. The researcher did data collection from the restaurant managers. At least one week was spent at each of the study units to have the questionnaire filled out.

Due to the Covid 19 restrictions and government protocols during the pandemic, strict adherence was maintained throughout the exercise. Therefore, the restaurant managers were involved and purposively issued the questionnaires to the guests. Specific points were further identified at each study unit for the guests to drop the filled questionnaires. A total of 307 questionnaires were filled and collected from the guests while 36 were collected from managers.

3.11.2 Interview

Although it is challenging to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research, Russell, (2014), suggested several techniques. These techniques included refutational analysis, use of comprehensive data, constant testing and comparison of data, use of tables to record data, as well as the use of inclusive of deviant cases. The author (Russell, 2014) further posited that these techniques could help support the data sourcing, data validation and data presentation process of the research, as well as support the claim of reliability in terms of form and context. This study used both refutational and triangulation. The purpose of the refutational analysis is to support the claim of reliability. The process involved exploring and explaining contradictions between individual studies. The purpose of triangulation is to establish reliability. The

process was done by ensuring the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the qualitative data.

Due to concerns noted at the pilot testing stage, there were moderations on the use of a voice recorder and instead engaged a Shorthand Typist. Before conducting the interview, the researcher trained and inducted the Typist. The work of the Typist was to write down responses as the researcher conduct the interviews. Physical interviews were conducted at the respective study units at a time, and the venue was agreed upon between the researcher and the respondent. For the online interviews, the researcher had to send a link to the respective respondents before the start time.

According to Menter et al. (2011), interviews are used to elicit additional qualitative information from the key informants. The semi-structured interview questions gave the researcher considerable leeway to probe the responses while maintaining the interview structure. Through the interview sessions, the researcher gathered all the needed information from the unit managers.

Figure 3.1 below provides a brief description of the themes used to conduct oral interviews. The study established four main themes that included managers' work-related experience, social media support in restaurants, guests' social media experiences and guests' interactions on restaurants' social media. These themes and subthemes were adapted from Chung and Kim, (2011). Detailed sub-themes are shown in Figure 3.1.

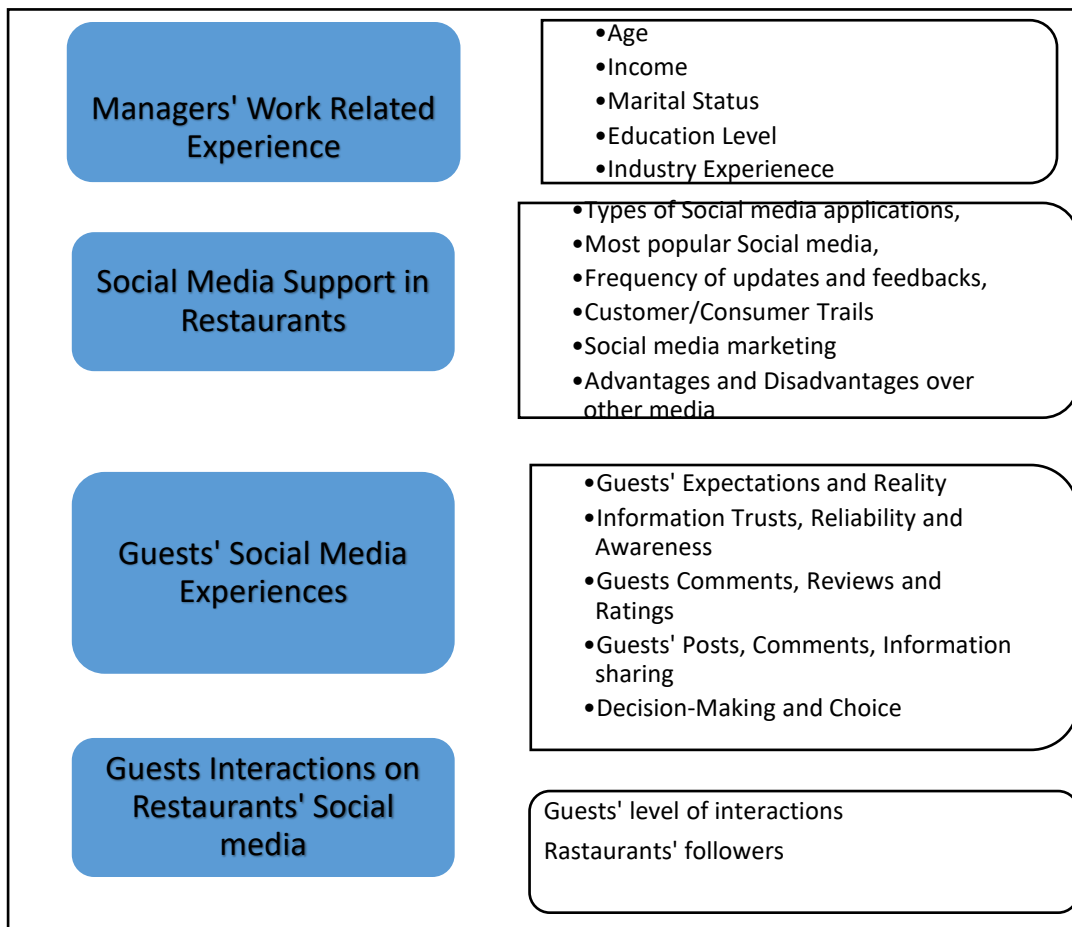


Figure 3.1: Study Main Themes and Sub-Themes (Adapted from Chung & Kim, 2011)

3.12 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data collection yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. As discussed later, Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) approach was used to analyze qualitative data. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 22).

3.12.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

The open-ended and close-ended questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. Descriptive procedures and techniques were used present descriptive statistics such as

means, variances and standard deviations, among others. Inferential data analysis involved a deep understanding of the values obtained from the descriptive procedures. In particular, this data analysis phase involved regression analysis to establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and test the hypothesized relationships.

All the study hypotheses were tested 5% level of significance. Values of the regression coefficients were used to determine the nature and the type of effect of the predictor variables on the dependent variable. To determine the proportion of the variation attributed to variations in the predictor variables, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used. Further, the significance of the model fit was tested using the ANOVA results. All the hypothesis tests were done at a 5% level of significance, and the decision was to reject the null hypothesis whenever $p < 0.05$.

3.12.2 Analysis of Qualitative data

Two sets of qualitative data were collected from the respondents. The first set was from the interview responses conducted with the managers (Appendix Ic). The second set was the open-ended questions (Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q16 & Q17), from the guests' questionnaire as shown in Appendix 1a.

Collected qualitative data was first cleaned and coded. According to Saldaña (2015), cleaning and coding of qualitative data involve identifying themes and concepts from the collected data. This procedure reduces these themes into manageable numbers, creating hierarchies and linking them into concepts and meanings for interpretation. The Shorthand Typist assisted in manually typing the data into a computer system. The researcher subsequently cleaned and categorized the qualitative data into themes,

concepts and meanings for interpretation as per the research objectives. The completeness and accuracy of the data was equally checked.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. It is particularly useful when a research project aims to discover themes and concepts embedded throughout qualitative data (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Six steps were followed as guided in thematic data analysis. The first step was for the researcher to familiarize himself with the data. The second step was to assign the preliminary codes to the data to describe the content. The third step was to search for patterns or themes in the codes across the different interviews. The fourth step was to review themes. The fifth step was to define and name the themes while the last step was to write and describe my themes in a cohesive manner.

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2012). Qualitative data may take the form of interview transcripts collected from research participants or other identified texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study. Although there exist three types of thematic data analysis (Coding reliability thematic analysis, Codebook thematic analysis, and Reflexive thematic analysis), this study used the reflexive reliability thematic which is purely qualitative. As recommended by Braun & Clarke (2012) this approach allowed the researcher to heavily depend on information collected from the respondents.

Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2012). It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes. According to (Braun & Clarke

2012) thematic analysis can be used to analyze most types of qualitative data including qualitative data collected from interviews, focus groups, surveys, solicited diaries, visual methods, observation and field research, action research, memory work, vignettes, story completion, and secondary sources.

In conclusion, thematic analysis allows the researcher a lot of flexibility in interpreting the data. It also allows the researcher to approach large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes.

3.13 Empirical Modelling

To test the significance of both direct and indirect effects, empirical models were used. The direct effects relationship and the relationship between the independent and dependent variables were examined first. The second was the indirect effects relationship that focused on moderating socio-demographic factors and individual factors. Last to be obtained was the joint effects model that involved regressing the dependent variable on a composite of the three study variables.

3.13.1 Social Media Platforms and Fine Dining Restaurant Model

The use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) allows the researcher to either group, interrogate, or predict factors in a relationship. In a direct effects model, the choice of fine dining restaurant was regressed on Social Media Platforms. This model was used to examine how the use of Social Media Platforms influences the decision of an individual to choose a given fine-dining restaurant.

This model took the

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots(i)$$

Where;

Y = Choice of fine dining restaurant (Dependent variable)

X₁ = Social Media Platforms (Independent variable)

β₀ = Constant (the intercept of the model)

β₁ = Coefficients of the independent variable

ε = the error term

The coefficient β₁ explains the change induced in the decision-making process of an individual as a result of the use of Social Media Platforms, while the error term accounts for the variability in the dependent variable, which has not been explained by the model. The significance of β₁ was used to test H₀₁

3.13.2 Moderating Effects Model

Moderating effects model was used to establish whether the interaction between socio-demographic factors and social media applications has a significant effect on the decision-making process of an individual to choose a particular fine dining restaurant. A similar procedure was also done while assessing whether individual factors have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants. Consequently, two moderating effects models were obtained.

The two models were expressed as follows

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M_1 + \beta_3 (X * M_1) + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (ii)$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_4 M_2 + \beta_5 (X * M_2) + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

Where;

- Y = Choice of fine dining restaurant (Dependent variable)
- X₁ = Social Media Platforms (Independent variable)
- β₀ = Constant (the intercept of the model)
- β₁ = Coefficients of the independent variable
- M₁ = Socio-demographic factors (Moderating variable 1)
- M₂ = Individual factors (Moderating variable 2)
- X*M₁ = Interaction between Social Media Platforms and Socio-demographic factors
- X*M₂ = Interaction between Social Media Platforms and Individual factors
- ε = the error term
- β₀ = Constant (the intercept of the model)
- β₁ = Regression coefficient for Social Media Platforms
- β₂ = Regression coefficient for Socio-demographic factors
- β₃ = Regression coefficient for interaction between Social Media Platforms and Socio-demographic factors
- β₄ = Regression coefficient for Individual factors
- β₅ = Regression coefficient for interaction between Social Media Platforms and Individual factors

The corresponding p-values for β₃ and β₅ were used to test hypotheses H₀₂ and H₀₃.

3.13.3 Joint Effects Model

The joint effects model involved regressing the dependent variable on a composite of the three study variables. That is, a composite of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic and individual factors was obtained and denoted as X^* . The choice of fine dining restaurant was then regressed on this composite variable as summarized in Table 3.4. The corresponding model, thus, became

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_6 X^* + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

Where;

- Y = Choice of fine dining restaurant (Dependent variable)
- X^* = Composite variable (Independent variable)
- β_0 = Constant (the intercept of the model)
- β_6 = Coefficients of the composite variable
- ε = the error term

The significance of the coefficient β_6 was used to test hypothesis H_{04} .

Table 3.4 Summary of Research Hypotheses Testing

Research	Hypothesis	Empirical/Statistical model	Interpretation of results
<p>Research</p> <p>To determine the influence of Social Media Platforms on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>Hypothesis 1:</p> <p>H₀₁: Social Media Platforms do not have any significant influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$,</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>Y = Choice of fine dining restaurants</p> <p>β_0 = intercept constant</p> <p>β_1 = regression coefficient for Social Media Platforms</p> <p>X = Social Media Platforms</p> <p>ε = random error term</p>	<p>H₀₁: $\beta_1 = 0$</p> <p>H_{01a}: $\beta_1 \neq 0$</p> <p>Where</p> <p>β_1 = regression coefficients for Social Media Platforms</p> <p>Reject H₀₁ if $p < 0.05$</p> <p>Otherwise, accept the H₀₂</p>

<p>Research</p> <p>To assess the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>Hypothesis 2: H02: Socio-demographic factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M_1 + \beta_3 X * M_1 + \epsilon$ Where: Y = Choice of fine dining restaurants β_0 = intercept constant β_1 = regression coefficient for Social Media Platforms (X) β_2 = regression coefficient for Socio-demographic factors (M_1) β_3 = regression coefficient for the interaction between X and M_1 ϵ = random error term</p>	<p>$H_{02}: \beta_3 = 0$ $H_{02a}: \beta_3 \neq 0$</p> <p>Reject H_{02} if $p < 0.05$,</p> <p>Otherwise, fail to reject the H_{02}</p>
<p>Research</p> <p>To investigate the moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>Hypothesis 3: H03: Individual factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya</p>	<p>$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_4 M_2 + \beta_5 X * M_2 + \epsilon$ Where: Y = Choice of fine dining restaurants β_0 = intercept constant β_1 = regression coefficient for Social Media Platforms (X) β_4 = regression coefficient for individual factors (M_2) β_5 = regression coefficient for the interaction between X and M_1 ϵ = random error term</p>	<p>$H_{03}: \beta_5 = 0$ $H_{03a}: \beta_5 \neq 0$</p> <p>Reject H_{03} if $p < 0.05$,</p> <p>Otherwise, accept the H_{02}</p>
<p>Research</p> <p>To determine the joint influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors on the choice of fine dining restaurants by</p>	<p>Hypothesis 4: H04: Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors do not have a significant joint influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in</p>	<p>$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_6 X^* + \epsilon$ Where: Y = Choice of fine dining restaurants β_0 = intercept constant; β_6 = regression coefficient that measures the joint effect of the three explanatory variables on the</p>	<p>$H_{04}: \beta_6 = 0$ $H_{04a}: \beta_6 \neq 0$</p> <p>Where β_6 = regression coefficient for composite variable X^*</p> <p>Reject H_{04} if $p < 0.05$,</p>

guests in selected Cities in Kenya	selected Cities in Kenya	choice of fine dining restaurants X^* = Composite variable of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors ε = random error term	Otherwise, accept the H_{04}
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3.13.4 Measurement of Study Variables

As guided by the Conceptual Framework (Figure 1.1), the study had the dependent variable (Social Media Platforms), the moderating variables (social demographic factors) and the individual variables. Specifically, the study focused to explore the extent of usability of Social Media Platforms in fine dining restaurants and not individual Social Media Platforms. This approach enabled the study to achieve its objectives.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are critical in quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). These considerations are centered on protecting research respondents and addressing honesty, objectivity, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, confidentiality, non-discrimination, and others. The researcher obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) through the Ministry of Higher Education and School of Post-graduate studies of Murang'a University of Technology (Appendix IV [a] and IV [b]).

Before collecting the data, the researcher availed both the consent letter (Appendix III) and cover letter (Appendix IV) to the respondents. Additionally, the researcher assured respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher also upheld the

principle of anonymity in the questionnaires while encouraging voluntary participation, non-withdrawal, data fabrication, or modification of data during analysis. Additionally, the researcher endeavored to conceal the identity of the respondents and acknowledge all sources of information in the citation and referencing using APA style version 7. This study was carried out during a time Covid 19 positivity was quite high and strict prevention protocols were observed by all participants.

3.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter expounds on the methodology used in this study to achieve the intended objectives. The chapter continues to outline the study framework that was followed during the research process. This includes establishing attributes of reliability and validity in this study, measurable study variables, and what and how to measure each of them. Finally, the ethical considerations guide this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research findings and discussions. Qualitative data were interpreted and discussed through themes, sub-themes, meanings, and concepts. Quantitative data were interpreted and discussed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

The overall objective of this study was to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu cities in Kenya. The study was further guided by four objectives that included the following; **(a)** to determine the influence of Social Media Platforms on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu cities in Kenya; **(b)** to assess the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' of fine dining restaurants in selected cities in Kenya; **(c)** to investigate the moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu cities in Kenya, and **(d)** to determine the joint influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected cities in Kenya.

Also, were the null four hypotheses stated below;

- H₀₁:** Social Media Platforms do not have any significant influence on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- H₀₂:** Socio-demographic factors do not have to moderate influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- H₀₃:** Individual factors do not have to moderate influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya
- H₀₄:** Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors do not have a joint influence on the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya.

4.2 Study Units

This study was carried out in fine dining restaurants in selected Cities, as shown in Appendices III, IV[a], and IV[b]. Fine dining restaurants are known to cater to upscale clientele, high-quality foods, offer full service, high operating standards, high pricing levels, finest ambiance and atmosphere (Amelia & Gargs, 2016). Other characteristics included in the study were location, nature of ownership, size, and several outlets in a restaurant.

4.3 Response Rate

The response rate in research is the percentage of people who complete a questionnaire in a survey, and the number of potential participants contacted (Creswell & Creswell (2017). A high response rate in research is important. It ensures study results are representative of the target population and that questionnaire performs its purpose as

intended. In quantitative research, response rates are commonly used to measure data quality. Creswell & Creswell (2017) further asserts that low response rates could result in nonresponse bias. Response rates are therefore an important measure for education surveys, and low response rates could potentially impact the validity of estimates, analysis, and inference in education research.

According to Frey (2018), response rates are calculated by dividing the number of usable responses returned by the total number eligible in the sample chosen (Table 4.1). The author argues that, with documentation from others, the survey response rate should be calculated as the number of returned questionnaires divided by the total sample who were sent the survey initially. While in others, they subtract the number of undeliverable questionnaires from the initial sample to obtain the denominator. However, Frey (2018) argues that this calculation only determines the questionnaire's success in inducing respondents to return to the survey and masks a potential large sample selection bias for the instrument.

In this study, a total of 385 questionnaires were targeted at guests, 22 questionnaires were for restaurant managers and another 22 questionnaires were for sales and marketing managers. All questionnaires were subsequently distributed for data collection. The managers were drawn from those directly interacting with guests. It included managers in the dining areas, and sales and marketing departments. Response rates from these three categories are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Categories of Response Rate

Respondent Category	Targeted	Actual	Percent
Restaurants' Guests	385	307	84%
Sales and Marketing Representatives	22	17	77%
Restaurant Managers	22	19	86%

Out of the targeted population, the total number of respondents who completed the questionnaires were 307 guests, restaurant managers were 19 and sales and marketing manager were 17. Thus, the response rates for guests, sales and marketing representatives and managers were 84%, 77% and 86%, respectively. Creswell and Creswell (2017) assert that such response rates confirm a sufficient sample for the study as they were above 70% of the threshold.

4.3.1 Response Ratings of Questionnaire

The study also analyzed the number of responses per each study location as shown in Table 4.2. A total of 118 questionnaires were filled and returned from Nairobi City while in Mombasa City, 127 questionnaires were filled and returned lastly in Kisumu City, 62 questionnaires were filled and returned. The purpose was to provide general information on distribution trends and response ratings across all the study locations.

Table 4.2 Distribution of Response Ratings

Study Location	Nairobi	Mombasa	Kisumu	Total Response
Guests	118	127	62	307
Restaurant Managers	8	8	3	19
Sales and Marketing Managers	6	8	3	17

4.3.2 Characteristics of the Fine Dining Restaurants

Managers were interviewed on various characteristics of their restaurants including operational challenges. For instance, the first question sought to know about managers' experience in fine dining restaurants, highs and lows in the restaurant industry, and key determinants. Responses were picked from the interview to provide a theme or concept in the discussion. There was a recurring point of agreement among the managers. A few responses from the respondents included the following key aspects;

"This sector is very exciting....., (Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35)

"It's mostly service to high-end clients..., (Respondent 9, male, aged 35–40)

"It pays well as compared to other jobs I know of" (Respondent 22, female, aged 30–35)

"Consumers are very informed and know what they want in a restaurant am unlikely to suggest what kind of meals they want..... Social Media Platforms are greatly impacting peoples' behavior" ... lifestyle, socially and economically" ... for example to spend or not to spend can be attributed to a special offer or an event advert on a restaurant's website or portal..... (Respondent 31, male, aged 40–45)

While another manager notes the following about the restaurant sector;

"A highly changing and unpredictable customer needs- people needing special diets..... Stiff competition unlike before due to varied players/competitors/unregulated in terms of food outlets, and has worsened due to Covid 19 pandemic.... Social media has made it easier to send pop-ups, prompt feedback and trailing customers, Good location is key to success and matching

technology with changing trends in dishes variety, Customer feedback is very important." (Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

And still, from another respondent, the following were the views;

"Nowadays there are so many contemporary restaurants that are difficult to define their status, some appear like fast foods- traditional- nyama choma... and many others" (Respondent 27, female, aged 30–35)

From the ongoing interview, there is a pointer to the power of Social Media Platforms among consumers. Also, were the directions the tourism and hospitality industry are facing as well as the changing dynamics that require managers to be very proactive. Managers confirmed the changing needs and expectations of the consumers. The changes mentioned included using Social Media Platforms and their influence on decision-making processes. It was further revealed how consumers search for information about a product or a service, make comparisons with others, and search for reviews and feedback from previous customers. Also, in the questionnaire were other characteristics that included location, nature of ownership, size, number of staff, and the number of outlets in each unit, as shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Characteristics of the Restaurants

Location of Restaurant	N	Percent
Nairobi City	7	37
Mombasa City	8	42
Kisumu City	4	21
Nature of Ownership		
Sole proprietorship	6	32
Partnership	3	16
Limited Company	7	36
Family-owned	3	16
Staff Size		
Not more than 5	0	0
Not more than 10	0	0
Not more than 20	10	53
Not more than 50	9	47
More than 50	0	0
Restaurant Having Outlets		
Yes	5	26
No	14	74

As shown in Table 4.3, Mombasa city had the highest number of managers interviewed at 42%, followed by Nairobi city at slightly above 37%, while Kisumu city had the least proportion at 21%. In terms of ownership, more than a third of the fine dining restaurants were registered as limited companies, followed closely by those under sole proprietorship. Both the partnership and family type ownership were the least at 16% proportions. According to Natalia et al. (2018), employment in restaurants contributes to job creation and improves the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Notably, from the study findings, slightly more than half of the restaurants had almost 20 employees, while the rest, had close to 50 employees. One facet of firm

performance is growth. Business growth is noted when a firm can establish and sustain itself in new markets or by opening outlets (Gök & Peker, 2017). Similar trends were observed in this study, where over three-quarters (74%) of the fine dining restaurants had outlets.

4.4 Bio-Data for Managers

Before examining the hypothesized relationships, the researcher obtained demographic information about managers. According to Menter et. al (2011), factors such as age, biological origin and gender have been identified as influential determinants of an individual's behavior. Previous studies, such as Sergio et. al, (2020); Kafel and Sikora (2013), indicate age as an essential personal characteristic that affects computer adoption and internet usage behaviors. Such behaviors include messaging, searching, downloading information, and purchasing. As shown in Table 4.3, this study included these factors to establish behavior patterns on Social Media Platforms usage. Each factor and percentage distribution are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Bio-Data for Managers (Restaurants Managers and Sales/Marketing Managers)

Gender	N	Percent
Male	33	84
Female	3	16
Age Distribution		
Less than 31	1	3
31-40	24	67
41-50	8	22
51-60	2	6
Above 60	1	2
Professional Training Level		
O-Level/A-Level certificate/KCSE	1	5
College Certificate/Diploma	22	63
Undergraduate	13	32
Postgraduate	0	0
Work Experience in the Industry		
Less than 6 years	0	0
6 - 10 years	4	11
11 - 15 years	11	31
16-20 years	18	50
21-25 years	3	8
Above 25 years	0	0
Years Worked in the Current Restaurant		
More than 5 years	27	75
Less than 5 years	9	25

As shown in Table 4.4, the majority of the managers in the fine dining restaurants were males at 80%, while the remaining were females. Gender disparity at the managerial level was also observed by ILO (2016) and Nzioka (2013), who noted that there are few women across the hospitality industry. This has been attributed to work

and family responsibilities among many women. In terms of age distribution, the majority of managers were aged between 31 and 40 years at 67%, while those aged between 41 and 50 years old accounted for slightly less than a quarter. The small age proportions were those below 31 years old (3%) and above 51 years old (8%) respectively.

Regarding professional training, the diploma level had the highest number of managers at 63%, while a third was trained at the undergraduate level and the remaining did not have any formal training. For the work experience of managers, a high percentage was observed in a work experience ranging between 16 and 20 years (42%), while the least ranged between 21 and 25 years (16%). It is also worth noting that all the 19 managers had worked in their current station for more than five years. This implied that they had well understood their work environment and adapted to various changing dynamics in the industry. This was an excellent observation for the researcher since it informed whether the managers fully and accurately understood critical determinants of the choice of fine dining restaurants.

4.5 Analysis of Objective 1

4.5.1 Influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' Choice of Fine Dining Restaurants

The first objective of this study was to determine the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine-dining restaurants in selected cities.

There were common trends of responses from the open-ended questionnaires filled by guests. The analysis of key themes revealed the percentage of number respondents agreeing on the influence of Social Media Platforms from the study units. Both the

total number and percentages of those agreeing and disagreeing are presented in Table 4.5. In Nairobi City, there were 118 respondents, Mombasa City had 127 respondents while Kisumu City had 62 respondents. Over 80% of the respondents acknowledged the influence of high similarity on the themes as per guests' questionnaire questions number 15, 16 and 17 in Appendix 1 (a).

Table 4.5 Percentage Ranking on the influence of Social Media Platforms

Study Location	Agreeing Respondents and Percentages	Not agreeing Respondents and Percentages
Nairobi	98 (32%)	20 (7%)
Mombasa	86 (28%)	41 (13%)
Kisumu	59 (19%)	3 (1%)

The following are key comments from sampled questionnaires. For instance;

"I search and compare across two restaurants before booking to avoid disappointments" (Respondent 02, female, aged 30–35; Mombasa).

"Social Media Platforms have a lot of exciting information for my family and our dining" (Respondent 15, Male, aged 30–35; Nairobi).

"I can connect with my friends and decide where to meet in a restaurant for fun" (Respondent 218, Male, aged 35-40; Mombasa).

"I get instant feedback from my restaurant of choice and can make my decision" (Respondent 307, Female, aged 25–30; Kisumu).

"I cannot desist temptation that comes with Social Media Platforms; I truly network and end up at a joint with friends" (Respondent 65, Male, aged 30–35; Nairobi).

From the managers' interview, the second question attempted to establish the different types of Social Media Platforms known to guests and their usability in fine dining restaurants. There was a common observation to this response such as the increased use of Social Media Platforms in the recent past as compared to a few years ago.

One common phrase among the managers was "our customers consciously or unconsciously use social media to search for their dining places" based on social groupings (Married or unmarried, age and nature of occupation). The following are some of the key responses from the interview;

"You know; people are using technology in almost every they do. Like WhatsApp and Facebook.... Nearly everyone is in it..... People are going for smartphones to remain modern"; it provides all that you need without seeking assistance from anyone"
(Respondent 27, female, aged 30–35)

"Different types of Social Media Platforms are in use in restaurants. Like us here (restaurant x in Mombasa), are on Facebook and Twitter. Our guests too are 'VVIPs', and they are always keen on what is happening around here and there"
(Respondent 5, male, aged 30–35)

"The most common applications I interact with are WhatsApp, followed by Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and now is Tik Tok" (Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

"Customers send feedback, reviews, and comments about our restaurant, and we like it (a restaurant in Mombasa)" Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35)

"We get it all from our competitors..... we are able 'to remain top of the things.... These apps have become shopping websites" (Respondent 9, male, aged 35–40)

One manager mentioned the use of suggestion boxes and checkbooks for recording guests' comments and feedback besides the social media application

"But besides social media, we use suggestion boxes and guest checkbooks to record guest comments/complains and compliments" (Respondent 22, female, aged 30–35).

4.5.2 Characteristics of the Guests

The main characteristics used to define the study respondents included gender, marital status, level of income, occupation, and level of education. Previous studies on consumer behavior (Kotler et al, 2014) recommend these characteristics as the main attributes of social demography.

Key responses from guests revealed factors of preferences while selecting restaurants for their dining needs. For instance, Respondent A5 (Nairobi) says *"I like this particular restaurant due to its location and privacy"*.

Respondent B124 (Mombasa) says, *"I like this particular restaurant due to their quality standards, I get value for my money"*

Respondent C2 (Kisumu) says, *"It's a strategic location to connect with my friends"*
Actually, I came to know about it through social media"

From the managers' interviews, more married men were observed to visit the fine dining restaurants.

"We receive more male clients than female clients. For instance, "over 70% of our covers are mostly male accompanied by colleagues' males.... Certainly, in business meetings" (Respondent 17, male, aged 40–45

4.5.3 Profile of Social Media Platforms

Most questions in the research instruments revolved around SMPs and how their usability influences fine-dining restaurant choices. Therefore, the researcher had to inquire about various SMPs that guests frequently use and for what reasons they use the applications. Responses on the type of Social Media Platforms frequently used were as shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Type of Social Media Platforms Frequently Used

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percent
Facebook (SNS)	128	42
Twitter (SNS)	24	8
Instagram (SNS)	36	12
WhatsApp (SNS); messaging	110	36
TripAdvisor/Expedia/Yelp (Social Review Sites)	9	3
Total	307	100

Table 4.6 reveals that the most preferred Social Media Platforms were Social Network Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp as well as Social Review Sites that included Trip Advisor, Expedia and Yelp. The results further showed that Facebook had the highest usage proportion at 42%, followed by WhatsApp (36%). On the other hand, TripAdvisor/Expedia/Yelp and Others had the lowest usage at 3%. The observation of a high proportion of use of Facebook as the most popular SMA in the hospitality sector is a confirmation of the findings by Fortis (2015), Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) and Kiiru (2018). The three studies had previously noted that Facebook leads in the hospitality industry as compared to other Social Media Platforms.

4.5.4 Guests' use of SMPs in Fine Dining Restaurants

Responses from the guests' questionnaire established reasons as well as how Social Media Platforms enable them to select dining restaurants. The following responses confirm guests' use of Social Media Platforms for dining needs. For instance, respondent A8 (Nairobi), *"I mostly search through the internet for my outing needs; I compare services and varieties of excitement"*

Respondent B88 (Mombasa), *"It's through Social Media Platforms that I can get the best offer with my friends"*

Respondent C 254 (Kisumu), *"Nowadays social media provide me with all that I need and for a fact fitting my needs"*

From the managers' interviews, Social Media Platforms were found to positively influence guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. This was confirmed by some of the managers' responses such as the following;

"Our customers have membership status; they use Social Media Platforms as far as dining out is concerned" Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35).

"People here, 'connect' to come and have fun" (Respondent 27, female, aged 30–35)

"Ideally, we post what our clients see and come for it.....others we make bookings for them either through calls, emails chat boards- Facebook and Twitter" (Respondent 5, male, aged 30–35)

Further, on the use of SMPs, six (6) constructs (statements) were formulated, and respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with the usage of SMA stated in the identified statements. A Five-point Likert scale was used as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Ratings on Usage of Social Media Platforms

No.	Statements on the use of Social Media Platforms by guests	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	I use Social Media Platforms to search for my dining restaurant					
2.	I use my phone to search for my dining restaurant					
3.	Social media pop-ups prompt me to search for my dining restaurants					
4.	I always visit fine-dining restaurants that have active internet searches					
5.	I use my phone to make a restaurant booking					
6.	I use my phone to pay bills, including restaurant bills					

Key: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

The descriptive statistics were further calculated to establish the weightings of the use of Social Media Platforms. Table 4.8 further show the summarized analysis of the Likert scale on Mean ratings (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Skewness (Sk) and the Kurtosis (K) of the responses

Table 4.8: Use of Social Media Platforms

Use of SMA	Mean	SD	Sk	K
I use SMA to search for dining restaurant	1.66	1.037	0.890	3.121
I use my phone to search for dining restaurant	2.06	1.097	0.206	.875
Social Media pop-ups prompt me to search for dining restaurant	2.07	1.159	0.082	.279
I always visit dining restaurants with active internet services	3.01	1.515	-.051	-1.512
I use my phone to make a restaurant booking	2.35	1.308	.734	-.683
I use my phone to pay bills, including restaurant bills	1.91	1.022	0.239	.960

Table 4.8 gives statements regarding the use of Social Media Platforms to access various services in a restaurant. Since most of the mean ratings were less than 3 (*Neutral*), it implies that respondents generally agreed with the identified statements. It is worth noting that the least mean ratings were observed in using SMPs to search for dining restaurants ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 1.037$) and using a mobile phone to pay bills ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 1.022$). Based on the nature of the scale, a low mean rating implied that respondents strongly agreed with the statement in question. On the other hand, visiting dining restaurants with active internet services had the highest mean score ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.515$), indicating that the responses tended towards disagree side.

In general, the mean ratings do not vary significantly from one another, which is evidence that there is a high frequency of usage of SMPs and choice of fine dining restaurant. Skewness coefficients show small values that range between 0 and 1. This range of skewness values indicates that responses to this question generally exhibited symmetric distribution. Symmetric distribution implies normal distribution, which is advisable for any regression modeling.

4.5.5 Important Aspects of How SMPs Influence Guests on Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant

As noted earlier, the key predictor variable was Social Media Platforms. The researcher, therefore, identified certain aspects of how SMPs influence the choice of fine dining restaurants. Respondents were then asked to rate the extent of influence of the aspects. Seven constructs were assessed, and respondents were asked to rate them using a five-point Likert scale of 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 =

Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Respondents were to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Ratings on the Importance of Social Media Platforms

No.	Important Aspects of How SMPs Influence Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Location of Restaurant					
2.	Reputation of Restaurant					
3.	Availability of Internet Services					
4.	Operating hours Restaurant					
5.	Presence of Online Services					
6.	Presence of Online Payments					
7.	Use of Online Marketing					

As shown in Table 4.9, constructs that were identified included the restaurant's location, the restaurant's reputation, availability of internet services, operating hours of the restaurant, presence of online services, presence of online payments and use of online marketing. The descriptive statistics reveal the Mean (M) ratings, Standard Deviation (SD), Skewness (S) and Kurtosis (K) for each construct as seen in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Ratings on the influence of Guests' Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant

	Mean	SD	Sk	K
Location of restaurant	1.16	.375	2.041	2.410
Reputation of restaurant	1.26	.352	1.170	-.718
Availability of internet services	2.42	1.170	.212	-1.419
Operating hours of the restaurant	1.74	1.046	1.243	.374
Presence of online services	2.37	1.383	.235	-1.921
Presence of online payments	2.42	1.346	.187	-1.866
Use of online marketing	1.84	1.463	1.256	-.300

It can be noted that respondents agreed that location and the general reputation of a restaurant are essential in dictating how SMPs influence the choice of fine dining restaurants. High mean ratings, which were also on the agreeing side, were observed on the availability of online services as well as online payment options.

The column for standard deviation (SD), and measured homogeneity of the responses, showed heterogeneity of responses on the presence of online services (SD = 1.383) and lowest on the reputation of the restaurant (SD = 0.352). A slight standard deviation is an indication that the respondent unanimously agreed with the statement in question. Therefore, this implies that all respondents strongly agreed that a restaurant's general reputation is vital in dictating how SMPs influence the choice of a fine dining restaurant.

Skewness values show that, generally, the ratings tended towards a positively skewed distribution since none of the skewness values is less than zero. For inferential analysis, the skewed responses were normalized by standardizing them. Kurtosis values showed a range of values between -2.0 to 2.5. It implied that, these values were evenly distributed and that, the responses did not have a sharp and thin distribution curve. The two measures showed that the distribution of the responses was not a threat to regression analysis, as discussed later.

4.5.6 Managers' Assessment of Guests' Comments and Reviews

One aspect of organizational performance is having good customer relations that result in growth and business profitability. Previous studies (Ndivo & Manyara 2018; Bee-Lia Chua 2020) indicate that the larger hospitality industry should always deliver superior services to customers than competitors. This is key to customer satisfaction

and can be achieved by providing platforms where customers can review and comment. Online platforms such as Twitter applications, Facebook, Instagram, and WeChat enable instant feedback from customers. This action yields positive results if the management promptly addresses customer concerns. Over 80% of the restaurant managers and sales and marketing managers positively agreed on the importance of guests' reviews and comments about restaurants. Additionally, the statements strongly supported by the manager's interview as shown below;

“ It’s known all over, what social media is doing in our society both good and bad..... You it bad and you receive it” (Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

“We are always careful on what we do here coz of our good services that keep us well known in social fora” (Respondent 9, male, aged 35–40)

From the above themes and concepts, Social Media Platforms play a pivotal role in the decision to choose a restaurant or not. Consumers are knowledgeable about various products and services that are offered in restaurants either through online search or e-WOM. However, seven (7) managers disagreed with the above statement, and the following were the contrary key comments picked from them.

” Our clients just walk in and order from our favorites” Our name (a restaurant x in Nairobi) says it all to our loyal customers..., actually you cannot just walk in here without a formal booking irrespective of who you are”. The loyalty of a firm's customers has been recognized as the dominant factor in a business organization's success. Specific examples have been cited in the hospitality and tourism industry (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000)

Loyal customers are the ones who will purchase the same brand regardless of convenience or price. These loyal customers have found a product that meets their needs, and they're not interested in experimenting with another brand.

Also, the availability of an effective platform for reviews and comments and timeliness in addressing the concerns are key to the success of this action. This study, therefore, explored five constructs on comments and reviews by guests as shown in Table 4.11 with the distribution of responses.

Table 4.11: Comments and Reviews by Guests

Responding to comments and reviews	N	Percent
No	0	0
Yes	19	100
Frequency of receiving comments and feedback		
Nearly on a daily basis	7	37
Anytime there is an issue	12	63
At least once a week	0	0
After every two weeks	0	0
Once a month	0	0
Frequency of response to comments and feedback		
Nearly on a daily basis	3	16
Anytime there is an issue	16	84
At least once a week	0	0
After every two weeks	0	0
Once a month	0	0
Communicating back to guests		
Yes	16	84
No	3	16
Reasons prompting internet/WIFI installation		
Yes	10	53
No	9	47

Table 4.11 shows that all managers (100%) in fine dining restaurants respond to guests' comments and reviews. Assessment of the frequency at which managers were receiving comments and feedback showed that 63% of the managers received comments and feedback at any time there was an issue while the remaining had it

happening almost daily. On the frequency at which the managers responded to these comments and feedback from 84% agreed on any time, there was an issue while the remaining were doing it daily. This finding showed that, generally, the restaurants are frequently receiving comments and feedback and act on them promptly.

According to Yao, Qiu and Wei (2019), communication of feedback to customers allows service providers to improve service delivery in an organization. For this reason, this study sought to establish if the administration in fine dining restaurants communicates feedback to guests. Over 84% of the managers noted that they communicated feedback to guests, while the rest did not at all. Further on this, slightly more than half of the restaurants (53%) cited the reasons that prompted the installation of internet and WiFi services within their premises.

4.6 Analysis of Objective 2: Moderating influence of Socio-Demographic Factors

In the questionnaire (Q10, Q11 & Q12), guests were asked to list factors of preference preferred at a particular restaurant. Among the most cited factors and ranking by the respondents included marital status, middle-aged, and peers/friends as shown the Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Respondents' Ranking of Social-Demographic Factors

Study Location	Total Responses	Agreed	Disagreed
Nairobi City	118	113	5
Mombasa City	127	108	19
Kisumu City	62	57	5

Additional sampled responses to support the influence of social demographic factors include the following;

Respondent A3 (Nairobi), *“This restaurant is ideal for my family”*

Respondent B67 (Mombasa), *“I frequent here with my colleagues for a great meal as we discuss businesses”*

Respondent C96 (Kisumu), *“It is one of the best restaurants in this region, you cannot miss come, I value their services”*

From the managers' interviews, social demographic factors were found to play a key role in determining the choice of dining restaurants. In this case, social demographic factors included age, gender, marital status, level of income and level of education. Consumer behavior studies usually consider these factors as drivers of their attitudes. A general observation was that most of the managers agreed. However, eight (8), argued for the contrary with the following;

“Maybe, it's the only income that dictates either to buy it or not to”, “It's not clear how gender would not allow a client to come to us..., “Age may not be a factor to either come or not to come to use coz the underage are usually accompanied by their parents”... “We generalize our clients and not discriminate due to age, gender nor race”....

“It's only a combination of several factors that enable the use of Social Media Platforms e.g. clients in the same social group behaving in a certain way, at times we find the host person almost dictating the consumption pattern either the Man or the woman depending on the group combination...”

“I think financial abilities dictate our clients and thereby standards of our services. we enjoy high-end clientele, both local and international and few cases of lone customers”

The researcher further conceptualized various social-demographic factors that would indirectly affect the choice of fine dining restaurants. The specific factors considered

included gender, age, level of education, nature of the occupation, and monthly earnings, as summarized in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Socio-Demographic Factors

Gender	N	Percent
Male	183	60
Female	124	40
Age Distribution		
Between 20 and 30 years	42	14
Between 31 and 40 years	108	35
Between 41 and 50 years	98	32
Between 51 and 60 years	48	16
61 years and above	11	4
Level of Education		
Primary School Certificate	0	0
O-Level/A-Level certificate/KCSE	11	4
College Certificate/Diploma	116	38
Undergraduate	104	40
Postgraduate	76	25
Nature of occupation		
Self-employed	111	36
Permanent	156	52
On contract	28	9
Casual	0	0
Student	10	3
Monthly Earning		
Not more than 100,000	65	21
Not more than 200,000	56	18
Not more than 300,000	66	22
Not more than 400,000	46	15
More than 400,000	74	24

The summary provided in Table 4.13 shows that out of the total number of guests who participated in the study, male respondents accounted for 60% while females accounted for the remaining 40%. Five (5) different strata were constructed in age distribution, ranging from the youngest to the oldest. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents (35%) were aged between 31 and 40 years old, closely followed by those aged between 41 and 50 years old (32%) while those aged above 60 years old, accounted for 4%. Perhaps is the novelty and adventurous of these types of guests that

the restaurant managers should be keen to address their needs. The Adventurous Personality Type theory (Oldham & Morris, 1995) describes major characteristics of aged customers. The study findings are further confirmed by Lennon et al. (2012) as cited in Pew Internet; Eleftheris and Barbara (2017), that more than 80% of active internet users are aged between 18-29 years.

On the use of social networking sites, the study further revealed that over 70% of the users are aged between 30-49 years, while about half of the users were aged between 50-64 years and beyond. Thus, suggesting a relationship between aging and decreasing ICTs use. While this may be the previous trend, recent studies show intense reliability on social media across all ages. For example, in the USA, over 65% of adults now use social networking sites increased to a nearly tenfold jump in the past decade (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Similarly, five (5) strata were used to assess the level of education of guests. As shown in Table 4.13, most of the respondents (38%) had attained College Certificate or Diploma training level, followed by those who had attained undergraduate education (34%). The least proportion (4%) was observed as those who had attained not more than post-secondary education. It is also worth noting that none of the guests had a primary school certificate as their highest level of education. This was an indication that a majority of the guests are knowledgeable about the use of various Social Media Platforms to make comments or post reviews and ratings.

As another socio-demographic factor, the researcher perceived the nature of occupation to affect the choice of fine dining restaurants significantly as later revealed upon testing the second null hypothesis. In this case, five (5) categories, including self-employed, permanently employed, on contract, casual employee and students,

were established. In these categories, more than half of the respondents (52%) were permanently employed while others were casuals or students and accounting for about 5% each.

Economic crusaders postulate that consumers tend to increase their purchasing or spending behavior as income grows. The consumption schedule defines the difference between income and consumption. That is, an increase in monthly earnings triggers an increase in the consumption of major purchases and non-essential goods. Responses on monthly earnings showed that most respondents (24%) stated that they earned more than kshs 400,000.00, while the lowest proportion (15%) were individuals who earned below kshs 100,000.00. However, it can be noted that small margins existed between different monthly earnings across all categories of the respondents. Interestingly, this did not deter anyone across all categories of respondents from visiting the fine dining restaurants for a service.

4.7 Analysis of Objective 3

4.7.1 Moderating influence of Individual Factors

Studies on consumer behavior describe individual factors as the personal factors that strongly influence their buying behaviors. Personal factors vary from person to person and result in a different set of perceptions, attitudes, and behavior toward certain goods and services. Examples of these factors include age, occupation, lifestyle, economic status of the person, and personality traits. Thus, the responses to this question were identified along with these themes and meanings.

Key responses from guests revealed influences of some of these factors as shown in the questionnaire (Q16 & Q17) and a summary in Table 4.14. Notably, was a high

number of those agreeing on the influence of individual factors on the choice of dining restaurant across all study locations.

Table 4.14 Percentage Ranking of influence of Social Media Platforms

Study Location	Number of Responses	Number of those Agreeing	Percentage (%)
Nairobi City	118	115	40
Mombasa City	127	123	35
Kisumu City	62	55	25
	307	293	100

Also, the sampled responses from the respondents in the three study locations and as shown below.

Respondent A12 (Nairobi), *"I can network with co-workers and socialize"*

Respondent B 31(Mombasa) *I use Social Media Platforms both at work and when searching for personal items-online shopping"*

Respondent C 29 (Kisumu), *"There is plenty of important information that I receive through Social Media Platforms, especially on new products and services around here"*

From the managers' interview, the majority agreed on the importance of these factors in influencing individual behavior. Ranked highest, was lifestyle as it is influenced by the economic status of a person. Other responses included;

"Most of our clients hold senior positions in society. (Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35).

"We cater for Very Very Important Persons (VVIPs) from either the government or corporates" (Respondent 10, male, aged 35–40).

“There is always a relationship between individuals’ earning, age and occupation”
(Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

From the above responses, there is a close relationship between individual behavior and lifestyle, implying high income or other earnings are likely to dictate spending trends. People are likely to adjust their lifestyle as income improves and vice versa. As explained in Maslow’s Theory, there are psychological needs that are intrinsic and exist at five levels. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that the five categories of human needs dictate an individual's behavior. Those needs are physiological, safety needs, love, and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

The last question sought to know if Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors jointly influence the guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. Managers were further required to give percentage estimates across the three factors of influence. Whereas this was challenging to respond to, most managers agreed on the strength of the combinations.

“It’s difficult to separate among the three factors.... they equally affect” (Respondent 5, male, aged 30–35)

“Maybe I give more weight on Social Media Platforms (40%), and the rest 30% each”
(Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

“Sometimes individual factors come first, followed by social demographic factors and least is Social Media Platforms” Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35).

From the above responses, a combination of Social Media Platforms, social demographic factors, and individual factors was found to influence the decision-making process of the person. This is a confirmation of the importance of consumer

behavior. There are different set of factors that influence the behavior of a person which includes, psychological factors, social factors, cultural factors, personal factors and economic factors which make a composite variable.

A total of six (6) individual factors were further assumed to have a notable effect on the relationship between the usability of SMPs and the choice of fine dining restaurants as identified by the researcher. Factors that were considered included frequency of visits, nature of meals served, visit company (people accompanying a guest), reasons for visits, sources of information about the restaurants and preferences on the choice of restaurants. Responses on each of the factors were summarized as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: General reasons for visitation

Frequency of visit	N	Percent
First timer	51	17
Been here before	126	41
I frequent here weekly	24	8
I frequent here once in a while	106	34
Nature of meal served		
Breakfast/Off-breakfast	34	11
Lunch	207	67
Evening/Sundowner coffee	12	4
Dinner	54	17
Others	0	0
Visit company		
Alone	50	16
With friends	118	38
With work colleagues	41	13
With family	82	26
With school mate	16	5
Reason for visit		
To take meal/food/drink	212	69
To meet with friends	36	11
To transact a business	24	8
To watch your favorite TV program	15	5
To access free internet	1	0

To enjoy ambience/environment/convenience	19	6
Source of information about the restaurant		
Television/Radio	12	4
Social media/Restaurants' website	229	74
Print media	8	3
Word of Mouth (WoM)	58	18
Preference for the choice of restaurants		
I prefer those within my proximity	57	18
I prefer those that offer fine dining services	99	32
I prefer restaurants with memberships	132	43
I prefer chain restaurants	19	6

Table 4.15 shows that two-thirds of the respondents (41%) had previously visited the particular fine dining restaurant. On the other hand, the least proportion of guests (8%) consisted of those who had weekly visits to the restaurant visited. This was an indication of loyalty among the guests. Assessment on the nature of meals served had lunch as the highest at 67% while the least was Evening or Sundowner coffee at 4%. On Visit Company, guests who visit restaurants with friends accounted for just more than one-third of the proportion at 38%, while the guests who visited the restaurants with their schoolmates accounted for only (5%). On the reason for visit, it was observed that more than half of the guests (68%) had visited the restaurants to take meal/food/drink. Watching favorite TV programs had the least proportion at 5%.

A previous study by Ahmet and Sehmus (2021) reported that access to the correct information through social media enables a person to make an informed decision. The study, therefore, inquired how respondents obtained information about the restaurant. The use of social media, including restaurants' websites, was the highest at 75%, while the lowest proportion (3%) was observed on print media to access information about a restaurant. It is noted that none of the guests reported obtaining information about the restaurants through roadshows. The study further established that two-thirds prefer

fine dining restaurants with memberships, followed by about a third of those that offer fine dining services. Perhaps this could be why most guests visit fine dining restaurants to take meals, food, or drinks. Preference for chain restaurants had the lowest proportion accounting for only 6%.

4.7.2 Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant -Determinants

In this section, the study assessed determinants of the choice of fine dining restaurants as shown in Table 4.16, Table 4.17 and Table 4.18 below. Several factors were identified by the researcher and grouped into three categories, were food and service-related factors, online-related factors and restaurant features as shown in Appendix 1 (a). These factors were considered important when choosing a fine dining restaurant. The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the respective factors. A Five-point Likert scale of 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree was then used.

In Table 4.16, the respondents were asked to rank the importance of service quality, safety and security factors while selecting fine dining restaurants. Notably, were the high numbers of those either strongly agreeing or agreeing on the importance of these factors. The percentage ratings were calculated and presented in Table 4.16. It ranged between those strongly agreeing and agreeing on one side, and those strongly disagreeing and disagreeing on the other side. None was considered to be neutral.

Table 4.16: Service Quality and Safety/Security Factors

Study Location	Strongly Agreeing	Agreeing	Disagreeing	Strongly Disagreeing	Number of Respondents
Nairobi City	76 (64%)	37 (31%)	2 (2%)	3(3%)	118
Mombasa City	59 (46%)	57 (45%)	4 (3%)	7(6%)	127
Kisumu City	45 (73%)	17 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	62

In terms of restaurant-related factors, the analysis of responses again revealed an average ranking among the three study locations as shown in Table 4.16. However, after a closer look at the three categories, both the service quality, safety, security and Online related factors were ranked higher than the restaurant-related factors.

Table 4.17: Restaurant-related factors

Study Location	Strongly Agreeing	Agreeing	Disagreeing	Strongly Disagreeing	Number of Respondents
Nairobi City	61 (52%)	57 (48%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	118
Mombasa City	68 (54%)	56 (44%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	127
Kisumu City	37 (60%)	22 (36%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	62

Additionally, the descriptive statistics further revealed the ranking and importance of factors in the choice of fine dining restaurants. A total of 307 respondents were able to rate the extent to which the identified factors determine the fine dining restaurant choice. The responses were summarized using descriptive statistics and presented using Mean (M) ratings, Standard Deviation (SD) and Skewness (Sk) in Table 4.17 gives this summary.

Table 4.18: Fine Dining Restaurant-Determinants

	Mean	SD	Sk
Food and Service-Related Factors			
Food and drinks variety	1.12	.422	4.928
Food and drinks quality	1.09	.325	3.613
Price of food and drinks	1.41	.763	2.036
Value for money	1.19	.466	2.734
Speed of service	1.26	.521	2.591
Online/Internet Related Factors			
Availability of internet services	2.94	1.473	-.027
Ease of obtaining internet password	2.94	1.447	-.047
Ease of keying Wi-Fi password	2.97	1.423	-.036
Ease to logging into Wi-Fi access	2.92	1.436	-.003
Speed of Wi-Fi	2.86	1.440	.070
Mode of payment of bills	1.61	.795	1.653
Presence of online booking	2.08	1.142	.966
Presence of online payments	2.18	1.184	.956
Restaurant's Features			
Lighting in the restaurant	1.66	.864	1.655
Comfort of furniture	1.36	.629	2.146
Type of clientele	1.52	.742	1.771
Operating hours	1.67	.796	1.333
Restaurants' atmosphere	1.14	.449	4.308
Restaurants' location	1.20	.522	3.253
Friendliness of waiting staff	1.13	.392	4.362
Restaurants' reputation	1.35	.625	1.858
Standard of restaurant	1.30	.566	1.993
Availability of meeting facilities	2.04	1.103	1.030
Guaranteed privacy	1.29	.644	2.834
Guaranteed security	1.22	.564	3.069
Guaranteed personalized services	1.23	.560	3.043
Ample parking space	1.25	.572	2.890
Cleanliness of the restaurant	1.15	.410	2.603
Visit company	1.58	.789	1.530

It can be seen from Table 4.18 that mean ratings in all the determinants were less than 3 (*Neutral*). This was an indication that respondents tended to agree that the determinants are key in influencing the choice of fine dining restaurants. This was also evident in the minor deviations among the mean ratings in all factors. A similar trend of small margins was also observed among the standard deviations in all determinants. Also, only online-related factors had a negative skewness coefficient in the three categories. A negative skewness coefficient, based on the nature of the Likert Scale,

implied that the responses tended towards the Strongly Agree side more than any of the categories. This was a shred of evidence that respondents generally agreed that online or internet-related factors, including the use of Social Media Platforms, are key in influencing their choice of fine dining restaurants.

On food and service-related factors, the pricing of food and drinks had the highest Mean rating of 1.41 (SD = 0.763), while the quality of food and drinks quality had the least mean rating of 1.09 (SD = 0.325). Among factors related to Online and Internet, ease of keying Wi-Fi passwords had the highest mean rating of 2.97 (SD = 1.473), while the mode of payment of bills had the lowest mean rating of 1.61 (SD = 0.795). The section that sought to assess restaurant features had sixteen (16) constructs. Availability of meeting facilities had the highest Mean rating of 2.04 (SD = 1.103), while the least rating was observed on the friendliness of waiting for staff (Mean = 1.13, SD = 0.392).

4.8 Analysis of Objective 4: Co-joint Influence of Social Media Platforms, Social demographic factors, and Individual factors

To answer this objective, managers were asked about their views on how Social Media Platforms, social demographic factors and individual factors influence guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. Managers were further required to give percentage estimates across the three factors of influence. Whereas this was challenging to respond to, most managers agreed on the strength of the combinations.

“It’s difficult to separate among the three factors.... they equally affect” (Respondent 5, male, aged 30–35)

“Maybe I give more weight on Social Media Platforms (40%), and the rest 30% each”
(Respondent 28, male, aged 30–35).

“Sometimes individual factors come first, followed by social demographic factors and least is Social Media Platforms” Respondent 2, male, aged 30–35)

From the above responses, a combination of Social Media Platforms, social demographic factors, and individual factors was found to influence the decision-making process of the person. This is a confirmation of the importance of consumer behavior. There are different sets of factors that influence the behavior of a person which includes, psychological factors, social factors, cultural factors, personal factors and economic factors which make a composite variable.

4.9 Introduction to Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

In regression analysis, both direct and indirect effects models were examined. As shown in the conceptual framework, the study had four main variables, which were Social Media Platforms (SMA), Socio-Demographic Factors (SDF), Individual Factors (IF) and choice of fine dining restaurant (DR). The independent variable was Social Media Platforms, while Socio-Demographic Factors (SDF) and Individual Factors (IF) were moderating variables. The dependent variable was the choice of a fine-dining restaurant. Therefore, the direct effects model involved examining the direct influence of Social Media Platforms on the choice of fine dining restaurants.

On the other hand, indirect effects models involved assessing the moderating influence of Socio-Demographic Factors and Individual Factors and the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurant. The joint effect regression model involved obtaining a composite variable of Social Media Platforms, Socio-Demographic Factors and Individual Factors and regressing the choice of fine

dining restaurant on the composite variable. However, obtaining these regression models was preceded by diagnostic tests to ascertain whether the collected data satisfied the conditions for regression modeling.

4.9.1 Diagnostic Tests

In regression analysis, diagnostic tests are crucial in determining whether the collected data can be used to obtain valid and reliable regression models. Since testing the research hypotheses depends on the results of regression analysis, these preliminary tests were vital for the researcher. As discussed in Chapter Three, diagnostic tests included tests for normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity.

4.9.2 Normality Test

The normality test evaluates how responses in a survey or values in a data set deviate from a normal distribution. Normality test measures the amount of and significance of any deviation from a normal distribution of responses. The dependent variable is the response variable in regression modeling, and diagnostic tests focus on the dependent variable. Therefore, the only fine dining restaurant choice was considered in the normality test.

The test was done using the Shapiro-Wilk test. In the Normality test, the null hypothesis is that research responses are typically distributed against an alternative claim that the responses are not normally distributed. The condition will, thus, be satisfied whenever one fails to reject the null hypothesis. That is, whenever the p-value > 0.05 , the normality condition is satisfied. The results of this test were as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Tests of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df.	Sig.
Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant	.776	306	.107

It can be seen in Table 4.19 that Shapiro-Wilk test statistics are less than one for the dependent variable. The column for degrees of freedom corresponds to the number of observations. The p-value for the dependent variable is greater than 0.05, which implies that the null hypothesis of no significant departure from normality is accepted. As previously mentioned, failing to reject the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance is an indication that the requirement of normality is fulfilled.

4.9.3 Linearity Test

The linearity test checks whether there is a relationship between the dependent and independent variable(s). A linearity test was done using eta and correlation coefficients in this study. The two statistics measure the nature of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable(s). Eta-squared measures the explained variation in the dependent variable attributed to variations in the independent variable(s). The Eta value ranges from 0 (zero) to 1 (one), where 0 (zero) implies an absence of any linear relationship and the value 1 indicates a perfect linear relationship. In this test, the obtained significance value is used to determine whether the linear relationship is significant or not. The linearity condition is satisfied when the p-value is less than 0.05. Results for the linearity test were as shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: Linearity Test Results

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant (Dependent Variable)	Pearson's R	0.5591	.001
	Eta	0.5612	
	Eta-squared	0.3147	
Number of Valid Cases		306	

Table 4.20 shows a linear relationship between the independent variable (SMA) and the dependent variable (DR). The eta value shows this (= 0.5612), which is not zero, and the correlation coefficient value (= 0.5591). According to the value of eta-squared, the explained variation is 31.5%. This linear relationship was significant at a 5% level of significance since the corresponding p-value was 0.001 (< 0.05). Based on these results, the condition of the linear relationship was satisfied.

4.9.4 Multicollinearity

The multicollinearity test examines any association among predictor variables other than with the dependent variable. Multicollinearity increases the standard error of regression coefficients, and therefore, any predictor variable that associates with other predictor variables is usually ignored. Increased standard errors of regression coefficients interfere with the significance of the coefficients. Multicollinearity was determined using Tolerance values and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). A tolerance value of less than 0.20 indicates the existence of multicollinearity (Field, 2009). For the variance inflation factor, the absence of association between predictor variables is shown by VIF values of 1. A VIF of at least 5 is a signal of collinearity associated with that variable. Multicollinearity test results were as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Multicollinearity Test Results

Predictor Variables	Collinearity Statistics		Comment
	Tolerance	VIF	
Social Media Platforms	.702	1.425	No multicollinearity
Socio-Demographic Factors	.469	2.134	No multicollinearity
Individual Factors	.502	1.993	No multicollinearity

In Table 4.21, it can be noted that all VIFs were less than 5 and all Tolerance values greater than 0.2 for all predictor variables. This was an indication that there was no association among the predictor variables, as stated in the comment's column. The results in Table 4.21 implied that all three predictor variables were essential and, therefore, included in regression modeling.

4.9.5 Homoscedasticity

In regression analysis, homoscedasticity defines a condition where the dependent variable has a constant variance across all levels of the predictor variable(s). The condition of constant variance was examined using Levene's test statistics. In this test, a null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in variability of the dependent variable across all levels of the predictor variables is tested.

Failing to reject the null hypothesis is an indication that the homoscedasticity condition is satisfied. This test yields a p-value for each predictor variable. At a 5% level of significance, homoscedasticity is shown by a p-value greater than 0.05. The results of this test were as shown in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Homoscedasticity Test Results

	Levene's Statistics	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Social Media Platforms	0.117	1	305	.916
Socio-Demographic Factors	1.104	1	305	.790
Individual Factors	0.832	1	305	.623

From Table 4.22, it can be observed that all p-values are more significant than 0.05, which implies that the null hypothesis in this test is not rejected. This indicates that the variance of the dependent variable across all levels of the variables is equal, and thus, the homoscedasticity condition is satisfied. Based on the results of diagnostic tests, the collected data was suitable for regression analysis and could therefore be used in testing the study hypotheses.

4.10 Testing of Research Hypotheses

As discussed in Chapter Three, testing the study hypotheses was done using the outputs of regression analysis. This was done using regression coefficients and the corresponding significance of p-values. All decisions were made at a 5% level of significance, and consequently, the null hypotheses were rejected whenever the matching p-value was less than 0.05.

Apart from using p-values, Field (2009) advises that a hypothesis can also be tested using some computed test statistic value and comparing it with tabulated values of a suitable distribution. Therefore, in this study, both p-values and t-statistic values were used to test the null hypothesis. Using the latter approach, the null hypothesis was rejected whenever a computed t-value was more significant than the corresponding tabulated t-value. Tabulated t-value was obtained at a 5% level of significance and

$(n - 1)$ degrees of freedom, where n is the number of observations (was 307). The t-table t-value at 0.05 level and 306 degrees of freedom are 1.966. Therefore, based on the t-statistics, the decision was to reject the respective null hypothesis whenever observed t-values were greater than 1.966. Testing the hypotheses involved examining direct, indirect and joint effects.

The direct effects model was used to examine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while the indirect effects model explored the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors and individual factors. The joint effects model examined the influence of a composite variable of SMPs, SDF and IF on the choice of fine dining restaurants.

4.10.1 Direct Effect Model

Indirect effect model, the researcher examined whether there is a significant relationship between the usability of Social Media Platforms and the decision to choose a particular fine dining restaurant. Consequently, the following hypothesis was formulated

H₀₁: Social Media Platforms do not have any significant influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

The corresponding regression model for this hypothesis was expressed as follows

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \varepsilon$$

Where:

DR	=	Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant (Dependent variable)
SMA	=	Social Media Platforms (Independent variable)
β_0	=	Regression constant
β_1	=	Regression coefficient for SMA
ε	=	Error term

In regression modeling, outputs can be divided into three parts: Model Summary, ANOVA section, and Regression Coefficients. The model Summary section gives the explained variation in the dependent variable. The model summary section outlines the extent to which variations in the independent variable(s) bring a change in the dependent variable. This is revealed by the coefficient of determination (R-Squared) value. The ANOVA section determines whether the constructed model correctly fits the collected data.

The corresponding p-value in this section, if less than 0.05, shows that the obtained model correctly fits the data. Regression coefficients give the nature and the type of effect that predictor variable(s) has/have on the dependent variable. This section uses the corresponding p-values to inform whether the effects of predictor variables are significant or not. Associated with each predictor variable is the t-statistics, which can also be used to test for the significance of the influence of predictor variable(s). Therefore, results in this section were used to test the null hypothesis H_{01} .

Now, for the direct effects model, the regression output was summarized as shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Influence of SMPs on Choice of Dining Destination

Model Summary					
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.
.562	.3154	.3089	1.9002	26.160	.000
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	24.172	1	24.172	26.160	.000
Residual	281.820	305	.924		
Total	305.992	306			
Regression Coefficients					
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.	
(Constant)	.049	.660	.076	.095	
SMPs	6.516	1.263.	5.156	.001	
Dependent Variable: Dining Destination Choice Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platforms INTERPRETATION: All outputs were significant with p-values less than 0.05 DECISION: The null hypothesis was therefore rejected					

Table 4.23 shows an R-squared (coefficient of determination) value of 0.3154, which translates to 31.54% with an F-statistic of 26.16. The value R^2 implies that the use of Social Media Platforms as a predictor variable explains only 31.54% of the total variations in the dependent variable. This implies that the remaining 68.46% of variations in the choice of fine dining restaurant are attributed to other factors apart from the use of various Social Media Platforms. The observed standard error for this explained variation was found to be 1.9002, while the corresponding significance value was observed to be 0.000. The p-value implied that the explained variation was significant since the corresponding p-value was less than 0.05 (that is $0.000 < 0.05$).

The ANOVA result was used to investigate whether the conceptualized regression model of fine dining restaurant choice on the use of Social Media Platforms is a good fit for the collected data. This was done using the p-value in this section. From Table

4.16, the p-value, in this case, was observed to be 0.000. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, it implied that SMPs significantly influence the decision of an individual to choose a particular fine dining restaurant.

This inference was also made using the F-statistics value, which was observed to be 26.16. Using the F-ratio, the decision is that the regression model correctly fits the data if the observed F-value is greater than the F-tabulated value. From the F-distribution tables, the tabulated F-value is 3.86. The fact that the computed F-value (26.16) is greater than 3.86 is an indication of model fittingness to the data.

In the regression coefficient, the constant term was observed to be 0.049 and a corresponding standard error of 0.66. The constant term was not significant at the 5% level since the corresponding p-value was greater than 0.05 ($0.095 > 0.05$). For SMPs (independent variable), the regression coefficient was observed to be 6.516 (SE = 1.263) and a corresponding t-statistics = 5.156 and p-value of 0.001.

The p-value for SMA showed that the use of Social Media Platforms significantly influences the choice of a fine dining restaurant. Therefore, for H_{01} , the null hypothesis was rejected at 5% and concluded that Social Media Platforms, as a predictor variable, significantly influence the decision of an individual to choose a particular fine dining restaurant. This inference was also supported by the observed t-value, which was 5.156. Since the observed t-value was greater than the tabulated t-value (1.966), the decision is to reject the null hypothesis of no significant influence of SMA on dining restaurant choice. Therefore, both p-values for SMA and the corresponding t-statistics lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis H_{01} at a 5% level of significance.

This decision implies that Social Media Platforms are a significant determinant of dining restaurant choice. The regression coefficient for Social Media Platforms (= 6.516) implies that any unit improvement or positive adjustment in the usage of various Social Media Platforms increases the likelihood of an individual choosing a particular fine dining restaurant by 6.516 units. This observation, therefore, implies that the regression model of choice of fine dining restaurant on Social Media Platforms (or direct effects model) can be expressed as follows:

$$DR = 0.049 + 6.516 SMA$$

Where the notations have their usual meaning.

4.10.2 Indirect Effects Model

Indirect Effects models examined the moderating effect of socio-demographic factors and individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants. As a moderating variable, socio-demographic factors were denoted as **SDF**, while individual factors, as another moderating variable, were denoted as **IF**. The moderating influence of SDF and IF were examined as discussed herein.

4.10.3 Moderating Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors

Two regression models were used to investigate the moderating effect of socio-demographic factors. Moderation influence is usually significant if the interaction between the moderating and independent variables is significant. Therefore, the first regression model was obtained when the interaction term was excluded from modeling, while the other model was obtained when the interaction term was included in modeling.

These two linear regression models (without interaction and with interaction) were represented as follows:

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \beta_2 SDF + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \beta_2 SDF + \beta_3 (SMA * SDF) + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (ii)$$

Where;

DR = Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant (Dependent variable)

SMA = Social Media Platforms (Independent variable)

SDF = Socio-Demographic Factors (Moderating variable)

SMA*SDF = Interaction between SMA and SDF

β_0 = Constant (intercept of the model)

β_1 = Regression coefficient for SMA

β_2 = Regression coefficient for SDF

β_3 = Regression coefficient for the interaction term

ε = Error term

For the moderation effect of socio-demographic factors, the tested hypothesis was expressed as follows

H₀₂: Socio-demographic factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

Output for Model (i) was as shown in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24: Moderating Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors without Interaction

Model Summary					
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.
.692	.4782	.4501	2.0381	24.957	.000
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	43.175	2	21.588	24.957	.000
Residual	262.817	304	.865		
Total	305.992	306			
Regression Coefficients					
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.	
(Constant)	.053	.673	0.079	.096	
SMA	6.522	1.263	5.156	.001	
SDF	3.021	.768	3.932	.001	
Dependent Variable: Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platforms, Socio-Demographic Factors INTERPRETATION: All outputs were significant with p-values less than 0.05 DECISION: Introduce an interaction Term and compare the model outputs and make a decision					

Table 4.24 summarizes regression analysis for the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors when the interaction term is not included in the model. This model is, thus, multiple regression of the choice of fine dining restaurants on Social Media Platforms and socio-demographic factors. From the model summary part, it can be seen that the two predictor variables (SMA and SDF) explain up to 47.82% of the total variations in the choice of fine dining restaurants. This is shown by the value of $R^2 = 0.4782$. This explained variation was found to be significant since the p-value was found to be less than 0.05 (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). The obtained multiple regression model was found to correctly fit the data. In the ANOVA section, the regression model of fine dining restaurant choice on Social Media Platforms and socio-demographic factors was found to fit the data correctly. This is true since the corresponding model significance value was 0.000, which was less than 0.05.

Further, in the regression coefficients, the corresponding p-values for SMA and SDF were both found to be less than 0.05. This was an indication that, in this multiple regression model, these predictor variables have significant influences (p-values = $0.001 < 0.05$). A look at the respective beta values of the predictor variables reveals that Social Media Platforms and socio-demographic factors have positive influences with $\beta_1 = 6.522$ (SE = 1.263) and $\beta_2 = 3.021$ (SE = 0.768). This finding shows that the decision to choose a particular fine dining restaurant is significantly influenced by the usability of various Social Media Platforms and socio-demographic factors, and consequently, the multiple regression model without interaction was expressed as follows

$$\mathbf{DR = 0.053 + 6.522 SMA + 3.021 SDF \dots\dots\dots (iii)}$$

Even though Model (iii) explains how SMA and SDF influence a guest's decision to choose a particular fine dining restaurant, it does not, however, explain the moderating effect of socio-demographic factors. This can only be done by examining whether the interaction between Social Media Platforms and socio-demographic factors has a significant influence or not.

The significance of the moderating effect was investigated by including an interaction term in the multiple regression analysis. A new regression model, which took the form of Model (ii), was, thus, obtained as summarized in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Moderating Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors with Interaction

Model Summary					
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.
.693	.4806	.4510	3.8311	20.125	.005
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	50.835	3	16.945	20.125	.005
Residual	255.157	303	.842		
Total	305.992	306			
Regression Coefficients					
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.	
(Constant)	0.044	0.662	0.066	.075	
SMA	5.780	1.256	4.602	.001	
SDF	2.712	0.910	2.980	.002	
Interaction	0.641	0.450	1.425	.075	
Dependent Variable: Dining Destination Choice					
Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platforms, Socio-Demographic Factors, Interaction					
INTERPRETATION: All outputs were significant with p-values less than 0.05 except for the interaction Term					
<i>Insignificant change on R²</i>					
DECISION: Failed to Reject the Null Hypothesis					

In the regression coefficients section, it can be seen that all three predictors had positive regression coefficients. However, the corresponding p-values indicate that only SMA and SDF have a significant positive influence on the choice of a fine dining restaurant. This is indicated by the respective p-values of 0.001 and 0.002, respectively, while that of the interaction term was observed to be 0.075. Despite this mixed significance of the effects, the multiple regression model was expressed as follows

$$DR = 0.044 + 5.78 \text{ SMA} + 2.712 \text{ SDF} + 0.641 (\text{SMA} * \text{SDF}) \dots\dots\dots (iv)$$

Table 4.26 summarizes the multiple regression model when the interaction term is included in the model. For this model, the presumed independent variables were Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and the interaction term. It can be seen in the model summary section that these three predictor variables explain up to 48.06% of the total variations in the decision to choose a particular fine-dining restaurant. This was shown by the value of $R^2 = 0.4806$. This explained variation was significant since the corresponding p-value was 0.005, which was less than 0.05. The ANOVA section shows that this multiple regression model correctly fits the collected data. This was shown by a large F-Ratio (= 20.125) and the corresponding p-value = 0.005. The ANOVA results indicate that the model was significant at a 5% level of significance ($0.005 < 0.05$).

In the regression coefficients section, it can be seen that all three predictor variables had positive regression coefficients. However, the corresponding p-values indicate that only SMA and SDF have a significant positive influence on the choice of a fine dining restaurant. This is indicated by the respective p-values of 0.001 and 0.002 respectively, while that of the interaction term was observed to be 0.075. Despite this mixed significance of the effects, the multiple regression model was expressed as follows

$$DR = 0.044 + 5.78 \text{ SMA} + 2.712 \text{ SDF} + 0.641 (\text{SMA} * \text{SDF}) \dots\dots\dots (iv)$$

Testing the hypothesis about the moderating effect of socio-demographic factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants involved examining the significance of the interaction term.

A variable has a significant moderating influence if the interaction term in the second model is significant. Nevertheless, this decision can be backed up by examining the

significant change before and after moderation using the corresponding p-values. For a variable to have a significant moderating effect, it must have a significant influence in both models before and after the inclusion of the interaction term. Moreover, a significant moderation effect is depicted by an increase in explained variation after moderation.

Using these three conditions and the results in Table 4.25 and Table 4.26, it can be seen that the interaction term is not significant at 5%, evidence of a lack of moderation effect. This observation is also supported by the p-values of predictor variables, which are almost the same even after the inclusion of the interaction term.

It can further be seen that even though the explained variation is significant in both models, the increase is, however, very minimal. These observations do not satisfy the conditions for a significant moderation effect. The fact that SDF is significant in both models shows that it presents itself as an independent variable but not a moderating variable. The null hypothesis H_{02} was not rejected based on these results and deductions. That is, there is an insignificant change

4.10.4 Moderating Influence of Individual Factors

Similar to the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors, individual factors were examined using two models; one without the interaction term and another with the interaction term. The two linear regression models took the general form as follows:

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \beta_2 IF + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (v)$$

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \beta_2 IF + \beta_3 (SMA * IF) + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (vi)$$

Where;

DR = Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant (Dependent variable)

- SMA = Social Media Platforms (Independent variable)
- IF = Individual Factors (Moderating variable)
- SMA*IF = Interaction between SMA and IF
- β_0 = Constant (intercept of the model)
- β_1 = Regression coefficient for SMA
- β_2 = Regression coefficient for IF
- β_3 = Regression coefficient for the interaction term
- ϵ = Error term

The corresponding null hypothesis for the moderation effect of individual factors was stated as follows

H₀₃: Individual factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

The summary for Model (v) was as shown in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26: Moderating Influence of Individual Factors without Interaction

Model Summary						
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.	
.626	.3925	.3607	2.0381	19.549	.015	
5						
ANOVA						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.	
Regression	34.875	2	17.438	19.549	.015	
Residual	271.117	304	.892			
Total	305.992	306				
Regression Coefficients						
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.		
(Constant)	.058	.663	0.087	.099		
SMA	3.274	1.063.	3.080	.001		
IF	1.915	.679	2.820	.005		
Dependent Variable: Dining Destination Choice						

Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platforms, Individual Factors
INTERPRETATION: All outputs were significant with *p*-values less than 0.05
DECISION: Introduce an interaction Term and compare the model outputs and make a decision

Table 4.26 summarizes the multiple regression model of choice of fine dining restaurants on Social Media Platforms and individual factors. The model summary part reveals that both SMA and IF, as predictor variables, explain up to 39.25% of the total variations in the choice of fine dining restaurant. This explained variation was found to be significant since the *p*-value was found to be less than 0.05 (*p*-value = 0.015 < 0.05). The obtained multiple regression model was found to fit the data correctly. In the ANOVA section, the regression model of choice of fine dining restaurant on Social Media Platforms and individual factors was found to fit the data since the corresponding model significance value correctly was found to be 0.015, which was less than 0.05.

Further, in the regression coefficients, the corresponding *p*-values for SMA (*p*-value = 0.001) and IF (*p*-value = 0.005) were both found to be less than 0.05. This was an indication that, in this multiple regression model, these predictor variables significantly influence the choice of a fine dining restaurant.

Further, it can be observed that both Social Media Platforms and individual factors have positive influences on the decision made by a guest to choose a particular fine dining restaurant, with respective coefficients $\beta_1 = 3.274$ (SE = 1.063) and $\beta_2 = 1.915$ (SE = 0.679). Since the predictor variables are significant and the obtained model without interaction term correctly fits the data, Model (v) can, thus, be represented as follows

$$\mathbf{DR = 0.058 + 3.274 SMA + 1.915 IF \dots\dots\dots (vii)}$$

When the interaction term was included in the model, the summary statistics shown in Table 4.27 was obtained.

Table 4.27: Moderating Influence of Individual Factors with Interaction

Model Summary					
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.
.832	.4209	.4102	2.2141	14.299	.010
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	37.966	3	12.655	14.299	.010
Residual	268.026	303	.885		
Total	305.992	306			
Regression Coefficients					
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.	
(Constant)	0.052	0.912	0.057	.155	
SMA	3.860	1.277	3.022	.001	
IF	2.113	1.003	2.107	.002	
Interaction	1.716	0.843	2.035	.040	
Dependent Variable: Dining Destination Choice					
Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platforms, Individual Factors, Interaction					
INTERPRETATION: All outputs were significant with p-values less than 0.05					
A significant change in R ² after introducing Interaction Term					
DECISION: Rejected the Null Hypothesis					

Table 4.27 summarizes a multiple regression model when the interaction term is included in the model. Therefore, the predictor variables were Social Media Platforms, individual factors, and the interaction term in this model. The model summary section shows that with the inclusion of the interaction term, the explained variation jumps from 39.25% to 42.09%. It can also be observed that there is an increase in the significance level since there is a decrease in the p-value from 0.015 to 0.010 when the interaction term is included in the model. This indicates that the interaction term not only increases the explained variation but also makes it more significant.

The exact inference can also be made using the statistics in the ANOVA section since the significance of the model fittingness increases when the interaction term is included in the model. This is shown by the p-value that reduces from 0.015 to 0.010. In the regression coefficients section, it can be seen that all three predictors' variables not only had positive regression coefficients but were also significant at a 5% level of significance. The p-values showed this for the predictor variables being less than 0.05. The regression model of choice of fine dining restaurant on Social Media Platforms, individual factors, and interaction terms was, therefore, expressed as follows

$$\mathbf{DR = 0.052 + 3.86 SMA + 2.113 IF + 1.716 (SMA * IF) \dots\dots\dots (viii)}$$

To test for the significance of moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and choice of fine dining restaurants, the significance of the interaction term and the changes in the p-values were examined. As discussed in the test for **H₀₂**, individual factors, as a moderating variable, will have a significant influence if the interaction term is significant, if there is an increase in the explained variation and if both the independent variable and moderating variable remain significant after inclusion of the interaction term.

Using these conditions and the results in Table 4.27 and Table 4.28, it can be seen that the interaction term is significant at 5% and SMA and IF remain significant even after including the interaction term (as shown by the corresponding p-values). It is also worth noting that the inclusion of the interaction term increases the explained variation from 39.25% to 42.09%, further proof of the significant moderating influence of individual factors. Since all the conditions for the existence of a significant moderating influence are satisfied at a 5% level of significance, it implies that individual factors have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between Social Media

Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants. Therefore, the null hypothesis **H₀₃** was rejected.

4.10.5 Joint Effect Model

Testing the joint effect of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors involved obtaining a composite variable of the three variables and regressing the dependent variable on this composite variable. For simplicity, the composite variable was denoted as **X***, and the corresponding null hypothesis was stated as

H₀₄: Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors do not have a significant joint influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in selected Cities in Kenya

For this hypothesis, the regression model was expressed as follows

$$DR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X^* + \varepsilon$$

Where;

DR = Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant (Dependent variable)

X* = Composite Variable of SMA, SDF and IF

β_0 = Regression constant

β_1 = Regression coefficient for Composite Variable

ε = Error term

The summary for the joint effects model was as shown in Table 4.28

Table 4.28: Joint Effect Regression Model

Model Summary					
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change	Sig.
.6198	.3842	.3298	1.9344	23.463	.010
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	21.165	1	21.865	23.4603	.010
Residual	284.127	305	.932		
Total	305.992	306			
Regression Coefficients					
	Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.	
(Constant)	.061	.701	.087	.091	
Composite Variable	6.631	2.133.	3.109	.015	
Dependent Variable: Dining Destination Choice					
Predictors: (Constant), Composite Variable of SMA, SDF and IF					

Table 4.28 shows that for the combined effects model, the R-squared value was observed to be 0.3842, which is equivalent to 38.42% with a corresponding F-statistic of 23.4603. The value R^2 implies that the composite variable explains only 38.42% of the total variations in fine-dining restaurant choice. This explained variation was significant since the corresponding p-value = 0.01 (< 0.05). The value of R-squared (38.42%) implies that the remaining 61.58% of the variations or determinants in the choice of fine dining restaurants are attributed to factors other than the composite variable. The associated standard error of R-squared was found to be 1.9344.

The ANOVA results show an F-value of 23.4603 and a p-value of 0.010, less than 0.05. The p-value implied that the regression model of the fine dining restaurant choice on the composite variable correctly fits the collected data. Since the obtained model correctly fits the data, the choice of fine dining restaurants can be expressed as a function of the composite variable. This is, however, possible using the corresponding regression coefficients.

The regression coefficients section shows that regression coefficients for the constant term and composite variables are 0.061 (SE = 0.701) and 6.631 (SE = 2.133), respectively. Using the corresponding p-values, the constant term was not significant at 5% since the p-value = 0.091, while that of the composite variable was 0.015, indicating a significant positive effect. The p-value (= 0.015) implied that the Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors, as a composite variable, significantly influence the decision of an individual to choose a particular fine dining restaurant. Consequently, the combined effects model was expressed as follows:

$$\mathbf{DR = 0.061 + 6.631 X^*}$$

Where X^* is the composite variable of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic and individual factors. Based on the significance of the influence of the composite variable, the null hypothesis H_{04} was rejected at 5% and concluded that Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors have a significant joint influence on the choice of a fine dining restaurant was made.

4.11 Chapter Summary

Based on the results presented in Table 4.24, Table 4.25, Table 4.26, Table 4.27, Table 4.28 and Table 4.29, a summary of hypothesis testing was presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.29: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Model Type	Variable Definition	Hypothesis	Beta	P-value	Decision
Direct Effect	Social Media Platforms	H₀₁	6.516	.001	Reject H ₀₁
Moderating Effect	Socio-Demographic Factors	H₀₂	0.645	.075	Accept H ₀₂
Moderating Effect	Individual Factors	H₀₃	1.716	.040	Reject H ₀₃
Joint Effect	Composite Variable	H₀₄	6.631	.015	Reject H ₀₄

From Table 4.29, this study concluded that the use of various Social Media Platforms has a significant favorable influence on the decision of an individual to select a fine dining restaurant. The summary also revealed that socio-demographic factors, as another variable, present themselves as an independent variable, not as a moderating variable. Thus, the null hypothesis **H₀₂** was not rejected.

As a moderating variable, individual factors were observed to have a significant influence on the relationship between the use of Social Media Platforms by guests and the decision to choose a fine dining restaurant. Similarly, a composite of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors were observed to have a significant favorable influence on the choice of a fine dining restaurant.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter offers a summary, conclusion, and recommendations for the study. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu cities, in Kenya.

This study demonstrated the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice process of fine dining restaurants in the selected cities in Kenya. Rather than using a single-method approach, the study adopted a mixed-method (concurrent nested/embedded) research design to do the survey. Pragmatism philosophical stance influenced this research to answer what and how actions, situations, and consequences were related. The study targeted responses from restaurant managers, sales and marketing managers of fine dining restaurants as well as guests present, during the period of data collection. Data collection was done between July and September 2021. The study was conducted in fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu cities, Kenya. The study bears potential implications for the restaurant industry in Kenya.

The study was guided by the following four objectives; **(a)** to determine the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities in Kenya; **(b)** to assess the moderating influence of socio-demographic factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya; **(c)** to investigate

the moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya and (d); to determine the joint influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected Cities in Kenya. A simple random sampling technique was used to pick fine dining restaurants in Nairobi City. The purposive sampling technique was further used to pick study units in both Mombasa and Kisumu Cities. Both questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. A total of 307 guests and 36 Managers voluntarily participated in the study.

The first objective of the study was dominantly qualitative and rather than quantitative. The objective further hypothesized that Social Media Platforms do not have any significant influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities in Kenya. The study established a significant positive influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurant. According to managers' interviews, there was a verified presence of Social Media Platforms that significantly influenced the decision of an individual, similar to studies by Xiang et al., (2017); Leung, Law, Van-Hoof, & Buhalis, (2013). Also, significantly important from the study findings were the middle-aged married clients associated with fine dining restaurants as a new trend. According to Fortis (2015), youths were found to be the most users of Social Media Platforms in the USA. The study further established Social Networking Sites as the most popular social media application followed by Social Review Sites. The Social Networking Sites included Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp while Social Review Sites included TripAdvisor, Expedia and Yelp. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study confirms similar findings of Wamuyu, (2018); Kamau, (2017) and Oyoo, (2016).

The second objective of the study hypothesized that socio-demographic factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities in Kenya. The study established that moderating influence of socio-demographic factors was insignificant on the use of Social Media Platforms by guests to a choice of fine dining restaurants. The social demographic factors considered in the study included age, income, occupation, family size, family cycle, family assets and education level. Proponents of consumer behavior consider similar composite social demographic factors in the studies such as Ho, (2022); Eleftherios and Barbara (2017); Fortis, (2015). Findings from this study revealed the composite social demographic factors as an independent variable and not as a moderating variable. This contradicts previous studies by Karen, (2021); Ahmad, Ghazali & Othman (2015). Based on these findings, the study failed to reject this null hypothesis.

The third objective of the study hypothesized that individual factors do not have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities in Kenya. The study established a significant moderating influence of individual factors on the relationship between the use of Social Media Platforms and guests' choice of fine dining restaurant. As confirmed from previous studies Hemanthkumar & Nagendra (2016), individual factors play a critical role in the decision-making process of the guests while Pei & Ching (2018) had reference groups and social factors, Pattanachai (2015) had Physical environment, style of service and service quality as key factors. Individual factors have a significant influence on the relationship between the use of SMPs and the choice of a fine dining restaurant. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The fourth objective of the study hypothesized that a composite of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors do not have a significant joint influence on the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu Cities in Kenya. The study findings revealed a significant positive influence among the three composite variables; Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors on guests' choice of a fine dining restaurant. Similar observations by Faizan (2016) and Wang et al., (2015) revealed the composite variable of SMPs, SDFs, and IFs were observed to have a significant positive influence on the choice of a fine dining restaurant. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The study established varying characteristics among guests in fine dining restaurants. In terms of gender, males were more (80%) as compared to females. This implies that male guests are more likely to go out for a fine dining experience or hang out with friends. There were twice as many men as women who visited fine dining restaurants. Perhaps due to the nature of fewer or no social responsibilities within family settings. Also, to note, was the majority of guests in the fine dining restaurants whose age was between 31 and 50 years old and actively working either as employed or self-employed. Perhaps because they have disposable income or high earnings. Individual literacy level was found to play a role in using Social Media Platforms and choice of fine dining restaurants. The study findings show that majority of guests in fine dining restaurants were either holder of college or undergraduate certificates.

In terms of gender composition among managers in fine dining restaurants, the study established that male managers were four times more than female. This is a confirmation of the trend of hospitality jobs and gender inequality across the world.

The study also determined the age factor among managers. About two-thirds of the managers in fine dining restaurants were aged between 31 and 50 years old. Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, age is a key factor as these jobs demand a lot of physical strength and movement. The majority of these managers had post-secondary qualifications with work experience ranging between 16 and 20 years and working in their current job for the past 5 years. Formal training, qualifications, and years of work experience among the managers are a pointer to the nature and expected high standard in fine dining restaurants.

The study also established that Social Media Platforms have a direct effect on the choice of fine-dining restaurants. The study revealed significant positive ratings across different Social Media Platforms. Based on their usability Facebook was the most preferred followed by Twitter, and Instagram while WhatsApp, TripAdvisor, Expedia and Yelp were the least. This implies that Social Networking Sites and Social Review Sites are the most popular Social Media Platforms as compared to others. Conversely, consumers of fine dining restaurants were observed to trust comments and reviews posted by previous customers. Previous studies assert that 'if a guest decides to participate in an online network, shares a testimonial or recounts an experience, or downloads content, others in the network are likely to be affected by the opinion of the postings. Thus, the strength of posts through Social Media Platforms.

In contrast, some negatively impact the consumers. For instance, as cited from other studies, Social Media Platforms perform the greatest role in providing instant feedback across multiple platforms in the hospitality industry

The social demographic factors included in this study were gender, age, marital status, form/nature of employment (casual/contract or permanent), and level of income. This study conceptualized the social demographic factors as having moderating influence on guests' use of Social Media Platforms in the choice of fine dining restaurants. Based on managers' interviews and regression analysis, the social demographic factors were confirmed to have an insignificant positive influence. These factors were observed as having a direct positive influence on guests' use of Social Media Platforms in the choice of fine dining restaurants.

The individual factors included in this study were occupation, age, economic conditions of an area's lifestyle, and personality. Also confirmed from previous studies, these factors have been cited as behavioral variables. This study conceptualized these factors as a moderating factor in the choice of fine dining restaurants. The study observed that as a moderating variable, these factors significantly influence the relationship between the use of Social Media Platforms by guests and the decision to choose a fine dining restaurant.

This study further conceptualized and assessed the combination of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors in the choice of fine dining restaurants. Guests in fine dining restaurants would use these factors together to choose the dining occasion. The study observed these factors and was found to have a significant positive influence on guests' choice of a fine dining restaurant.

The lack of adequate literature on Social Media Platforms in the restaurant industry was the main motivation for this study. Additionally, the desire to learn more about consumer behavior in the context of selection and choice of fine dining restaurant. The

following are the study conclusions. Based on the first objective which assessed the direct effect of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine-dining restaurants, the study established a significant positive influence between the independent variable (Social Media Platforms) and the dependent variable (Fine Dining Restaurants).

Similarly, on objectives two and three, it was established that the social demographic factors had insignificant positive influence while the individual factors had a significant positive influence on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. The significant positive influence was equally observed with the composite variable (Social Media Platforms, Social Demographic Factors and Individual Factors) on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants.

The high positive Beta values on **H₀₁**, **H₀₃** and **H₀₄**, are a confirmation of the magnitude and direction of influence of the relationship between Social Media Platforms and guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. When guests are using Social Media Platforms to search for dining information, there is a significant positive influence. Thus, the interaction between Social Media Platforms and fine dining restaurants is an avenue for potential guests to explore and make an informed decision on dining needs.

5.2 Recommendations

This section offers recommendations based on the study findings. Three types of recommendations are presented and include recommendations for practice, recommendations for policy, and recommendations for further research.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Practice

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants in selected cities in Kenya. Given the verified presence of influence of Social Media Platforms on consumers of fine dining restaurants is great potential for communications, customer engagement and revenue generation to a business. Social Media Platforms should be made part of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in day-to-day operations as they directly impact customers' visits and subsequently the revenues. This suggests that, if utilized Social Media Platforms could be a great place for information dissemination for fine dining restaurants. The proportion of users of Social Media Platforms suggests that those not using them are more likely not to get the best of their memorable dining experiences. This study's findings make several recommendations for practice as follows.

1. The first contribution is to review the literature on Social Media Platforms. From the conducted interviews, the study recommends that Managers and owners of fine dining restaurants actively engage in Social Media Platforms in their day-to-day operations since guests were found to trust reviews and ratings posted by previous customers. The study's observations about the influence of Social Media Platforms and guests' decision-making process are a pointer to their essential roles in modern life.
2. Enrichment of consumer behavior theories (Fishbein, & Ajzen (1975); Engel Kollat Blackwell (1968), in the restaurant industry. Studies on consumer behavior have received tremendous attention from researchers. Previous studies have cited the development of new menus and menu items (Mhlanga, Hattingh & Moolman, 2014), customer satisfaction (Kleynhans & Roberson, 2015), and quality of food on offer as the main factors of influence. Others

have cited social media as another attributes despite variations between restaurant outlets and dining occasions (Leung, Law, Van-Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013; Xiang et al., 2017). This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the influence of Social Media Platforms, social demographic and individual factors on guests' choice of fine-dining restaurants and

3. For online review, comments, and feedback management strategies. There have been suggestions that the proliferation and widespread online reviews, comments and feedback can be a marketing opportunity. Previous studies have shown that positive reviews have great effects on consumers' choices whereas negative reviews could harm firms' reputations and reduce consumers' trust. From the interview, it is observable that Managers and owners of fine dining restaurants should be aware of the social demographic factors that positively influence the decision-making process. The study confirmed the direct effects of social demographic factors on guests' decision-making regarding the choice of fine dining restaurants. A study that assesses the social demographic factors as an independent variable and not as moderating variable is necessary.
4. Potential guests are encouraged to explore various posts and comments regarding a particular fine-dining restaurant before visitation. Previous studies have revealed Social Media Platforms are a tool to cope with online complaints. For instance, when a negative service experience is posted by a customer and the company fails to adequately resolve the complaints. This will enhance their dining expectations and memorable experiences.
5. Managers and owners of fine dining restaurants should be aware of individual factors that indirectly influence the decision-making process. For instance, age was a key factor among the majority of young users of Social Media Platforms

as well as peers/friends. Also noted from the study finding was the significant positive effects of the individual factors (moderating) on Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants.

6. The last observation was the direct significant influence of the combination of Social Media Platforms, social demographic factors and individual factors on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants. These factors influence the decision-making process of guests, and therefore managers and owners of fine dining restaurants should be aware of the combined influence of Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors, and individual factors on the choice. These factors are combined, and they positively influence the decision-making process on choices.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Policy

Previous studies (Oluwole, (2021); Nendo, (2017); Longart, (2015), confirm that corporate policies are formulated to assist a business in competing in the industry and attaining its strategic goals. Good policies provide employees with knowledge about what is expected of them, provide rules and guidelines for decision-making in routine situations, consistent and clear responses across the company in dealing with situations. Similar observations were revealed in this study and therefore recommends the following;

1. This study recommends partnering between the government of Kenya, the restaurant industry, and internet service providers for ease of access and information sharing on real-time available products and services from each party. The cheaper costs of these services are indirectly related to the consumption of hospitality products and services.

2. Another recommendation of this study is for the government of Kenya to monitor and ensure the quality of products and services as claimed through Social Media Platforms or on websites of fine dining restaurants ie “what is stated is what is served”.
3. This study also recommends to the government of Kenya amend Act that defines fine dining restaurants and have them gazetted, rather than relying on organizations such as TripAdvisor and Kenya Food Markets
4. The Restaurant sector fosters closer linkages among themselves for information sharing that help to understand changing consumer behavior.
5. Managers of fine dining restaurants should always consider Social Media Platforms as a tool for their day-to-day operations. In this case, to update and establish a daily routine to respond to all posts and comments on their social sites.

5.2.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study makes contributions to both the theory of Technology Acceptance Theory and Consumer Behavior Theory in several ways. The Technology Acceptance Theories (Davis, 1986; Rogers, 1962), have been evolving with the progression of technological advancements. This study assessed the influence of Social Media Platforms on guests' choice of fine dining restaurants which provides incremental insights into this industry. Consumers are using Social Media Platforms for several reasons. In the spectrum of the decision-making process, Social Media Platforms influence the choice. This study makes a theoretical contribution as it addresses the existing gap and bridges consumer behavior and decision-making on a choice of dining needs.

5.3 Future Work

This study recommends several areas for further research. It includes the following.

1. A study that will assess social demographic factors as an independent variable rather than a moderating variable.
2. A study to investigate the use of Social Media Platforms in other categories of restaurants.
3. A study that will investigate the influence of individual Social Media Platforms in fine dining restaurants.
4. A study that will assess the influence of Social Media Platforms in other sectors of the service industry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 PUBLICATIONS

The following papers have been published from this thesis results:

Kung'u, S. K. ., Muiruri, J. N. ., Makori, A., & Mapelu, I. (2022). Moderating Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors on the Relationship between Social Media Applications and Guests' Choice of Fine Dining Restaurants. *International Journal of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Events*, 6(1), 24–30. <https://doi.org/10.31940/ijaste.v6i1.24-30>

Kuria, S.K., Njoroge, J.M., Makori, A. & Mapelu, I. (2022). Assessment of Co-Joint Factors of Influence on Guests' Choice of Fine Dining Restaurants in Kenya. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure*, 11(1):248-262. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.262>

Dimitrios Buhalis, Kung'u Samson Kuria, and Joseph Muiruri Njoroge (2022). The *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*: Definition of Restaurants Page 725–728 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486.restaurants>

APPENDIX 2
QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESTAURANT
GUESTS/CUSTOMERS
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Please indicate your gender: Male Female

(1) Please indicate your age bracket

- [a] Between 20 and 30 years
- [b] Between 31 and 40 years
- [c] Between 41 and 50 years
- [d] Between 51 and 60 years
- [e] From 61 years and above

(2) Please indicate your education level bracket

- [a] Primary school certificate
- [b] O-Level or A-Level certificate
- [c] College certificate or diploma
- [d] Bachelor's degree
- [e] Postgraduate degree

(3) Please indicate that best describe nature of your occupation

- [a] Self-employed
- [b] Permanent employed
- [c] On contract
- [d] Casual
- [e] Student

(4) Please indicate your monthly earning brackets

- [a] Not more than Kshs 100,000/=
- [b] Not more than Kshs 200,000/=
- [c] Not more than Kshs 300,000/=
- [d] Not more than Kshs 400,000/=
- [e] More than Kshs 400,000/=

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

(5) Indicate frequency of your visit to this restaurant

- [a] It is my first time; I have never been to this restaurant before
- [b] I have been here before
- [c] I frequent here several times a week
- [d] I frequent here once in a while

(6) Indicate nature of Meal served

- [a] Breakfast/Off –breakfast
- [b] Lunch
- [c] Evening/Sundowner Coffee
- [d] Dinner
- [e] Others

(7) I frequent this restaurant while

- [a] Alone
- [b] As a group with friends
- [c] As a group with a work colleague
- [d] As a group with my family
- [e] As a group with school/college mate

(8) Indicate what reasons make you visit this restaurant

- [a] To take a meal/food/drink
- [b] To meet with friends
- [c] To transact a business
- [d] To watch my favorite TV Program
- [e] To enjoy ambience/environment/convenience

(9) Please indicate what you like in this particular restaurant

- [a] _____
- [b] _____
- [c] _____
- [d] _____
- [e] _____
- [f] _____

(10) Please indicate a list of factors that make you prefer this type of restaurants

- [a] _____
- [b] _____
- [c] _____
- [d] _____
- [e] _____
- [f] _____
- [g] If other reasons, indicate them _____

(11) Please indicate if any, other things that you can recommend for this particular restaurant

- [a] _____
- [b] _____
- [c] _____
- [d] _____
- [e] _____
- [f] _____

(12) Please indicate if any, other things you can recommend to other restaurants

- [a] _____
- [b] _____
- [c] _____
- [d] _____
- [e] _____
- [f] _____

(13) Please indicate how you came to know about this restaurant

- [a] Through television/radio
- [b] Through social media/Hotel website
- [c] Through print media
- [d] Through other word of mouth
- [e] Through roadshows

(14) Please indicate your preference on choice of restaurants

- [a] I prefer any restaurants within my proximity
- [b] I prefer restaurants that offer fine dining services
- [c] I prefer restaurants that have memberships
- [d] I prefer chain restaurants

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

(15) Please indicate which type of Social Media Platforms you frequently use

- a I use Face-Book
- b I use Twitter
- c I use Instagram
- d I use WhatsApp
- e Trip Advisor/Expedia and others.....

(16) For what reason or reason would you use Social Media Platforms?

- [a] _____
- [b] _____
- [c] _____
- [d] _____
- [e] _____
- [f] _____
- [g] _____
- [h] _____
- [i] If other reasons, indicate them_____

(17) Please describe how the social media application you have chosen enable or help you find this restaurant

(18) The following are some statements on use of Social Media Platforms by guests in restaurant choice. Kindly rate the extent to which you agree with the statements

using a Five-Point scale of **1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree**

No.	Statements on use of Social Media Platforms by guests	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	I use Social Media Platforms to search for my dining restaurant					
2.	I use my phone to search for my dining restaurant					
3.	Social media pop-ups prompt me to search for my dining restaurants					
4.	I always visit fine dining restaurants that have active internet searches					
5.	I use my phone to make restaurant booking					
6.	I use my phone to pay bills, including restaurant bills					

(19) Important Aspects on How SMPs Influence Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant

Kindly rate the extent to which you agree with the statements using a Five-Point scale of **1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree**

No.	Important Aspects on How SMPs Influence Choice of Fine Dining Restaurant	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Location of Restaurant					
2.	Reputation of Restaurant					
3.	Availability of Internet Services					
4.	Operating hours Restaurant					
5.	Presence of Online Services					
7.	Presence of Online Payments					
8	Use of Online Marketing					

FINE DINING RESTAURANT

(20) The following factors are considered important while choosing a fine dining restaurant. Kindly rate the extent to which you agree with the factors using a scale of **1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree**

No.	Factors Considered	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
	Service Quality and Safety/Security					
1.	Quality of foods and drinks					
2.	Variety of foods and drinks					
3.	Guaranteed privacy while in the restaurant					
4.	Guaranteed security to self and personal items					
5.	Guaranteed personalized services					
6.	Value for money					
7.	Speed of service					
	Online Services					
8.	Availability of Internet services					
9.	Ease to obtain password at the restaurant					
10.	Ease of Keying Wi Fi password					
11.	Ease to log into Wi Fi access					
12.	Ease of speed of the Wi Fi					
13.	Mode of payment of bills					
14.	Presence of online services such as online booking (Advance bookings)					
15.	Presence of online payments					
16.	Available of meeting facilities					
	Restaurant's Factors					
17.	Friendliness of waiting staff					
18.	Pricing of foods and drinks					
19.	Reputation of the restaurant					
20.	Standard of the restaurant					
21.	Atmosphere in the restaurant					
22.	Location of the restaurant					
23.	Lighting in the restaurant					
24.	Comfort of furniture					

25.	Availability of ample parking spaces					
26.	Cleanliness of entire restaurant					
27.	Type of clientele patronizing the restaurant					
28.	People accompanying me into the restaurant					
29.	Operating hours of the restaurant (opening and closing time)					

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESTAURANT MANAGERS; SALES AND MARKETING MANAGERS

Kindly Tick where best applies to your case

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR GENDER: [Male]_____

[Female]_____

General Information

1. Please TICK [] your age bracket
 - [a] Between 20 and 30 years []
 - [b] Between 31 and 40 years []
 - [c] Between 41 and 50 years []
 - [d] Between 51 and 60 years []
 - [e] From 61 years and above []

2. Choose your restaurant location
 - [a] In Central Business District (CBD)
 - [b] In downtown
 - [c] In Upper hill
 - [c] In West-lands
 - [d] If others, specify.....

3. Please indicate your highest level of education
 - [a] I did not complete my primary education
 - [b] Primary school certificate [Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
 - [c] O-level or A-level certificate [Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
 - [e] College Certificate
 - [f] College Diploma
 - [g] Bachelor Degree from university
 - [h] Postgraduate Degree (Master or PhD) from university

4. Please indicate your work experience in restaurant job
 - [a]Between 0 and below 5 years []
 - [b] Above 5 and below 10 years []
 - [c] Above 10 and below 15 years []
 - [d] Above 15 and below 20 years []
 - [e] Above 20 and below 30 years []

5. Please indicate, for how long has the restaurant been in operational
- [a] Less than year
 - [b] Not more than 2 years
 - [c] Not more than 5 years
 - [d] More than 5 years
6. Please indicate nature of ownership of the restaurant
- a. Sole proprietorship
 - b. Jointly owned with other partners
 - c. It is a limited company [d] It is a family-owned
 - [e] If others, specify.....
7. How many workers does your restaurant employ as at now?
- a. Not more than 5 employees
 - b. Not more than 10 employees
 - c. Not more than 20 employees
 - d. Not more than 50 employees
 - e. More than 50 employees
8. Does the restaurant have other outlets? _____ If Yes, indicate how many outlets_____
9. Do you respond to guests' comments and reviews? YES
 NO
10. How often do you receive comments and feedback?
- a. Nearly on daily basis
 - b. Any time there is a concern/issue from guest/s
 - c. At least once a week
 - d. After every two weeks [e] Once a month
 - [f] If others, specify.....
11. How often do you respond to comments and feedback?
- a. Nearly on daily basis
 - b. Any time there is a concern/issue from guest/s
 - c. At least once a week
 - d. After every two weeks [e] Once a month
 - [f] If others, specify.....

12. Would you say that you communicate back to the respective guests?

YES

NO

13. In what ways do you encourage guests to give comments and reviews about services

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. What tool or combination of tools, do you use to reach out guests for comments and reviews?

a. I use a suggestion box [b] I use guest checkbook

[c] I use both suggestion box and guest checkbook

[d] I use Social Media Platforms

[e] I use guest reviews from Trip-Advisors, Booking-in, and Expedia etc.

[f] If others, specify.....

15. Describe some of positive comments you receive from guests;

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. Describe some of negative comments you receive from guests;

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

17. Manager's and Supervisor's response on having internet/ Wi Fi in the restaurant

Are there reason/s that prompted you to install internet and Wi Fi services?

YES

NO

(1) Please describes reasons for having internet and Wi Fi services in the restaurants

.....

(2) Please can you quantified on using internet and Wi Fi services then and now

.....

18. Social media activities and firm's financial performance

On the following, kindly indicate the extent to which each contribute to restaurants financial performance.

To what extent do the following contribute to financial performance of the restaurant?

No.	Factors Considered	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Atmosphere in the Restaurant					
2.	Quality of Foods and Drinks					
3.	Variety of Foods and Drinks					
4.	Location of the Restaurant					
5.	Friendliness of Waiting Staff					

6.	Pricing of Foods and Drinks					
7.	The reputation of the Restaurant					
8.	Standard of the Restaurant					
9	Availability of Internet Services					
10	Operating Hours of the Restaurant (Opening and Closing)					
11	Presence of Online Services such as Online Booking (Advance Booking)					
12	Presence of Online Payments					
13	Available of Meeting Facilities					
14	Guaranteed Privacy while in the restaurant					
15	Guaranteed Security to Self and Personal Items					
16	Guaranteed Personal Services					
17	Available of Ample Parking					
18	Cleanliness of entire Restaurant					
19	Use of Online Marketing					

APPENDIX 4
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESTAURANT MANAGERS; SALES AND
MARKETING MANAGERS

- 1) Please tell me about yourself and describe your experience while working in fine dining restaurants *{to include age, income, marital status, education level and general description of the experience i.e. the highs and lows in the industry and key determinants}*.
- 2) What would you say about Social Media Platforms and their usability in fine dining restaurants *{probe for types of SMPs known by the respondent, pros and/or cons of each platform, which platform do they use etc.}*
- 3) In your view, do you think Social Media Platforms influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests? Kindly explain your answer.
- 4) How would you describe the effect of social-demographic factors on the relationship between use of Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurant by your guests?
- 5) Do you think individual factors plays a significant role(s) on the relationship between use of Social Media Platforms and the choice of fine dining restaurant by your guests? Kindly explain your answer.
- 6) Would you say Social Media Platforms, socio-demographic factors and individual factors jointly influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests? Kindly explain the nature of the influence. Also, give the extent (in percent) of the influence.

INTERVIEW FOR MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

1) **Please tell me about yourself and describe your experience while working in fine dining restaurants {to include age, income, marital status, education level and general description of the experience i.e. the highs and lows in the industry, communication tools and key determinants}.**

- ✓ Restaurants are very dynamic as compared other sectors in terms of costs; very unpredictable.
- ✓ If it survives the 5 years of operations, the it may last to operate.
- ✓ Much influence due to internet of things; technology changing way of doing things
- ✓ Consumers are very informed and know what they want as they visit a restaurant
- ✓ A highly changing and unpredictable customer needs
- ✓ Stiff competition unlike before due to varied players/competitors/unregulated in terms of food outlets, and has worsened due to Covid 19 pandemic.
- ✓ Restaurant management are keen to cut down costs.
- ✓ However, good services, customer privacy and quality services can assure sales returns.
- ✓ Good location is key to success and matching technology with changing trends in dishes variety
- ✓ Customer feedbacks very important.

2) **What would you say about Social Media Applications and their usability in fine dining restaurants {probe for types of SMPs known by the respondent, pros and/or cons of each platform, which platform do they use etc.}**

- ✓ People using technology on almost every they do
- ✓ Different types of Social Media applications are in use in restaurants eg Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok
- ✓ One must keep a balance on its usage and reality on the ground.
- ✓ This has necessitated installation of WiFi; but initial costs were huge.
- ✓ Customers use Twitter, WhatsApp, Mobile calls and TripAdvisor to send feedbacks, reviews and comments to this restaurant.
- ✓ Impacted on customer needs, tastes and preferences due to knowledgeable consumers
- ✓ Globalization and use mobile App with User-generated content and a comparison-shopping website
- ✓ Also, the restaurant has visitors' book and a suggestion box at the entrance.

Positive impact about Social Media are-

- One is able to connect faster and thereby communicates faster,
- Provides an easier opportunity to build networks in a business,
- It is the easiest way to brings change in business world,
- The sales and marketing department can easily track and reach out to the different social groups/clientele a restaurant may have,

- It's an easier and faster to propagate good business news or to manage business crisis
- Different marketing strategies and messages are easily formulated to target one group over the other

Negative impact about Social Media are-

- Despite criminalizing falsification on bloggers, there is continuation on posting of incorrect/inaccurate contents among business competitors,
- It times, a restaurant shows only the good side, resulting to unreliable information or false expectations to potential guests
- Once incorrect information leaks to the public, the content cannot be deleted and thereby hurting a restaurants reputation,
- Difficult to reach out to the conservative class of loyal customers on restaurants new development,
- Nowadays, there are case of fraud and scam on non-existences business; as reported by TripAdvisor in 2017

3) In your view, do you think social media applications influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests? Kindly explain your answer

- ✓ Yes, it does. Public are curious on all that is happening around them. For example, when a potential client read comments in TripAdvisor- which is global marketer, it informs a lot to the new customers. And a damage done is hard to correct. Others are using social media applications to take selfie photos either for positive or negative publicity
- ✓ That's why it almost becoming a crime on how the social media is being used

4) How would you describe the effect of social-demographic factors on the relationship between use of social media applications and the choice of fine dining restaurant by your guests?

- ✓ A combination of these factors impact on use of social media applications eg. People in same social group behaving in a certain way.
- ✓ At times we find the host person almost dictating the consumption pattern. This could be the Man or the woman depending on the group combination.
- ✓ I think financial abilities dictates our clients and thereby standards of our services. We enjoy high end clientele, both local and international.
- ✓ Men are more frequent and adult couples
- ✓ Certain days of the Week-Wednesday and weekends
- ✓ Majority takes normal lunches or reserved dinners
- ✓ Few cases of lone customers

5) Do you think individual factors plays a significant role(s) on the relationship between use of social media applications and the choice of fine dining restaurant by your guests? Kindly explain your answer

- ✓ Individual factors noted are; knowledge of the place, past experience at the place, friends and peer influence, attitude among other intrinsic factors that are seen to dictates personal choice.
- ✓ These factors have great relationship between the influence and choice.
- ✓ Some are intrinsic and influences a person's behavior and morals
- ✓ A person's upbringing greatly affects personal behavior.
- ✓ Also dictates buying behavior and what and how to consume.

6) Would you say social media applications, socio-demographic factors and individual factors jointly influence the choice of fine dining restaurants by guests? Kindly explain the nature of the influence. Also, give the extent (in percent) of the influence

- ✓ Yes, they all do. At times not easy to differentiate factors of influencing a person's choice. They all cut across
- ✓ Nowadays people are very dynamic with needs that are very unpredictable and therefore all put together make dining experience very demanding on the side of restaurant.
- ✓ Not easy to pinpoint the customer needs.
- ✓ Social media takes 40%, Social Demographic factors takes about 40% and Individual Factors takes 20%.

APPENDIX 5
THE URBAN AREAS AND CITIES (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2011 NATIONAL
COUNCIL FOR LAW

SPECIAL ISSUE _____ LIBRARY

Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 31 (Acts No. 3)



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

KENYA GAZETTE SUPPLEMENT
ACTS, 2019

NAIROBI, 14th March, 2019

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**APPENDIX 6
SAMPLING FRAMEWORK**

Name of the County	Name of the Fine Dining Restaurant
Nairobi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Lord Eroll 2) Hemmingway's' Brasserie 3) Sikia Fine Dining 4) Tatu Restaurant 5) Jiko 6) Hero Restaurant 7) INTI-A NIKKEI Experience 8) Tamarind 9) Seven Sea Food and Grill 10) Thai Chi Restaurant-The Stanley 11) Lucca 12) 45 Degree Kitchen 13) Mawimbi Seafood 14) Pango Brasserie 15) Soko Restaurant 16) Graze Restaurant 17) Tambourin Restaurant 18) Madhari Restaurant 19) Argenti Restauran & Lounge Riverside 20) 88 Restaurant 21) Café Magrib 22) Capital Club 23) Eagle's The Steak House 24) Fairmont The Norfolk 25) Shokudo Japanese Café 26) Fire Lake Restaurant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27) Gizani-Dinner in the Dark 28) The View Restaurant 29) Dial A Drink Kenya 30) Café Villa Rosa 31) Java House 32) Rudis Alfresco 33) Tacos Restaurant 34) Le Palanka Restaurant 35) EX Millionaire 36) Bali's Best Bar Restaurant
Mombasa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tamarind-Mombasa 2) Tamarind Dhow 3) Misono Restaurant 4) Imani Dhow restaurant 5) Haven Seafood Restaurant 6) Robertos Restaurants
Kisumu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Laughing Buddha 2) Duke of Breeze Rooftop Restaurant 3) Mon Ami Restaurant 4) Acacia 5) Kisumu Yacht Club

Fine dining Restaurants; Kenya Food Market, 2022; TripAdvisor, 2021

**APPENDIX 7
DATA COLLECTION PERMITS**

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref: 88999	Date of Issue: 03/June/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
Nairobi on the topic: INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS ON CHOICE OF FINE DINING RESTAURANT BY	
This is to Certify that Mr.. samson kung'u kuria of Murang'a University of Technology, has been licensed to conduct research in	
GUESTS IN SELECTED CITIES IN KENYA for the period ending : 03/June/2022.	
889935	NACOSTI/P/21/11022
Applicant Identification	 Director General
	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR
	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity	
Scan the QR Code using QR scanner	

**APPENDIX 8
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher: Samson Kuria Kungú
Title of Study : INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON GUESTS' CHOICE OF FINE DINING RESTAURANTS IN SELECTED CITIES IN KENYA

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, tick the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If you do not understand anything and would like more information, please ask

- I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in verbal and / or written form by the researcher. **YES / NO**
- I understand that the research will involve: *(FILLING IN A QUESTIONNAIRE WITH PERSONAL INFORMATION AS GUIDED BUT SPECIFICALLY FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES)* **YES / NO**
- I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give an explanation. This will not affect my future care or treatment. **YES / NO**
- I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. **YES / NO**
- I understand that any audiotape material of me will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed on completion of your research. **YES / NO**
- I understand that you (Researcher) will be discussing the progress of your research with others (Supervisors Only) at Murang'a University of Technology **YES / NO**

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and I have been given a copy of this form for my own information.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 9

RESEARCH COVER LETTER

Dear respondent,

REF: Request to voluntarily participate my Survey on the, Investigation on influence of Social Media Platforms on choice of fine dining restaurants by guests in Nairobi County

I am a Doctor of Philosophy candidate in the department of Hospitality Management at the

Murang'a University of Technology and I am conducting a research on *'influence of Social Media Platforms on choice of fine dining restaurants by guests within selected Cities'*

I am requesting you to participate in my study by answering the attached questionnaire. Kindly respond to all questions as indicated. I have engaged two (2) Research Assistants (4th year university students) to help me to distribute the questionnaires.

The information provided will inform customers, restaurant owners, and County government of Nairobi on requisite measures and strategies for supporting the development of Social Media Platforms for restaurant businesses. Kindly note, that there are no wrong answers from the choices given. Your honest opinion will be appreciated very much. The respondent is not required to write his or her name on the questionnaire. The information collected in this questionnaire will be used strictly for the purpose of this research only. Feel free to ask for clarification where necessary from the person distributing the questionnaire or you can contact me through the contacts given below.

Thank you for your assistance,

Samson Kuria – 0723 708591 or Email; skuria71@gmail.com;

Department of Hospitality Management,

Murang'a University of Technology

**APPENDIX 11
COUNTY OF MOMBASA**



