Visibility through clutter: How could small businesses cut through advertising clutter on Instagram?

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

By:

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Abstract:

Small businesses heavily relay on Instagram in order to build their brand with respect to its user friendliness, low cost, and accessibility. However, in a very competitive market it is difficult to capture online attention and develop word of mouth. Instagram can be a powerful marketing tool if properly understood, hence deeper investigation on this platform is required. While current literature has intensively explored the field of social media marketing post launching a business, it is somewhat limited in the pre-launch state. In parallel with the literature scarcity on pre-launch marketing, the motivation behind this research stems from the challenges small businesses encounter within launching. Advertising clutter presents itself as the preeminent challenge as it limits exposure for small businesses. Furthermore, consumers are irritated by the clutter hence it is necessary to empirically validate an approach that assists business in capturing consumer attention in cluttered advertising environments such as Instagram.

This study sheds light on the Food & Beverage sector in the Middle East which is currently among the most popular sectors advertised on Instagram (Crowd Analyzer, 2022). The contribution to the current stream of marketing literature comes from introducing solutions to advertising clutter on Instagram by incorporating Schema Incongruity Theory and providing cues that are viable for hedonic sectors. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the significance of activating bottom-up attention processing for consumers scrolling in cluttered environments such as Instagram. Lastly this research empirically validates a Pre-Launch marketing communication campaign model for new businesses, starting from capturing attention leading to purchase intention.

What can small businesses in the food industry do in order to build an attractive pre-launch marketing campaign? To answer this question, this study employed a three stage mixed methods design for the methodology, where the first qualitative stage consists of 5 focus group semi-structured interviews with middle eastern Instagram users to ask about their experience with restaurant ads and what would capture their attention whilst scrolling through their feed. This stage assisted in validating the pre-launch marketing framework and introduce new ideas that required further investigation. Secondly, upon the findings of the interviews, an experiment design was necessary to provide empirical validation on what type of ads capture consumer attention in cluttered Instagram environments. The experiment was conducted on 62 participants following a

within subject design to experiment how consumers react ironic ads compared to traditional. Lastly, to test the rest of the constructs in the framework, a questionnaire was conducted with 323 Instagram users that have a liking for food.

The findings of this study shed light on the necessary tools needed to build a successful pre-launch marketing campaign for small businesses by providing a step by step approach on the type of ads and type of opinion leaders that are most effective in middle eastern food & beverage sector. The findings also indicate the stages that an Instagram user undergoes until reaching the purchase stage. Understanding the stages of the purchase process can help new businesses align their marketing strategy with those stages to assist in building a more effective campaign. This study provides solutions for numerous managerial problems (Lack of marketing plans, a poor comprehension of the industry they operate in, and competition against well established companies) all three are pitfalls for small businesses in the middle east (Albalushi & Naqshbandi, 2022).

Keywords: Instagram, Food & Beverage Sector, Pre-Launch Marketing, Bottom-Up Attention Processing, Schema Incongruity Theory, Advertising Clutter.

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All praise to Allah for without his blessings, this PhD journey would have not been possible.

Where do I start?! It feels surreal that I’m writing this section as it has been a long but rather fruitful journey. I owe great thanks to many, and I hope that I can cover everyone.

This PhD thesis would have not been possible without the support and sacrifices of my family but more importantly my mother Haifa that stuck by my side through thick and thin, I love you mom! Thank you for encouraging me to follow this path.

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I want to use this chance to express my gratitude to friends and my brother/business partner Ahmed Al-Qallaf for their support, encouragement, and kind words along my journey.

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that, with the exception of properly cited quotations and citations, this thesis is entirely based on my original work. I additionally state that it hasn't been submitted for any other degree at Brunel University or any other institutions in support of attaining any other degree or qualification. Every source used in this study has been properly credited. I further affirm that all of the data in this thesis was gathered ethically and in accordance with academic guidelines.

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Table of Contents

Tables:

Figures:

Appendices:

Chapter 1. Introduction:

It is atypical to speak about food nowadays without correlating with Instagram marketing (Toma, 2017). Instagram users that are 18 to 35-year-old spend five days a year browsing food posts and 40% of them would avoid a restaurant if their Instagram presence was weak (Sheth, 2017). A recent study shows that out of 44 million Instagram users from Arab countries (Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) a total of 28 million show interest in food & drinks on Instagram (Crowd Analyzer, 2022). Arab's current interest in food can be coherent from a historical perspective, since the middle ages Arabs had a sophisticated understanding of food and served dishes that were immensely rich and refined (Heine, 2004). Today, the Arab food ways evolved immensely, however their passion for food remains intact.

The middle east food service market size is estimated at 55.65 billion USD in 2024, and is expected to reach $158.53 billion USD by 2034 (Rajasthan, 2024). According to Purple Quarter, (2023) the main reason behind continues growth is due the sector's growing desire for improvement and change. Part of these changes is the shift to convenient organic and healthful products. The number of restaurants and food outlets offering plant-based, vegetarian, and gluten-free options, as well as meals created with fresh ingredients that are acquired locally, has increased significantly as a result of consumers' desire for fresh healthier alternatives to processed foods and typical fast food (Messarra, 2023). Furthermore, consumers in the middle east and GCC in particular have a never ending demand for convenience specially when it comes to food, as a result fresh food delivery has changed in recent years, going from kitchens to dining rooms and even to cloud kitchens that serve food to those who live far away (Ogundimu, 2023). Undoubtedly, the meal delivery industry benefited when COVID-19 stopped operations in all of its segments. These days, it's not unusual to see service provider reps in cars serving fast food in and around urban areas (Purple Quarter, 2023). Consequently, there has been an increase in funding allocated to online ordering and food delivery services (Ogundimu, 2023).

Based on estimates from Statista (2024), the online meal delivery industry in the United Arab Emirates alone generated US$2.18 billion in revenue by the end of 2023, with an overall yearly growth rate of 6.33%, and reach US$2.79 billion in market volume by 2026 (Ogundimu, 2023). It is obvious that service providers or other market participants must yield to demand. With the passage of time, the Middle East has seen a boom in the number of online food delivery companies offering services ranging from grocery delivery to on-demand meal delivery, or both. Talabat is leading the field in terms of market share, with Deliveroo and Zomato coming in second and third, respectively (Purple Quarter, 2023).

These developments will have an ongoing impact on the Middle East's food and beverage sector as a whole, since investor attention to detail is essential to maintaining the financial viability of upscale restaurants (Ogundimu, 2023). Furthermore, as this sector continues to grow this will increase competition and increase difficulty for new companies entering the market. For small businesses to flourish in a such a challenging market a different marketing approach should be followed compared to the industry giants (Messarra, 2023).

A solution to this challenge, according to Collinson and Shaw (2001), Morris et al. (2002), and Martin (2009) is through the adoption of entrepreneurial marketing. Entrepreneurial marketing refers to the marketing strategies used by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), some of which may be new ventures, start-ups, or in their infancy. Moreover, entrepreneurial marketing, according to Bjerke and Hultman (2002), is "the marketing of small enterprises which grows through entrepreneurship. When compared to major corporations and traditional marketing, entrepreneurial marketing shows different patterns of consumer behavior as it is unconventional and salient in its approach. Due to their "small size", SMEs must have a distinct approach to marketing that is unplanned, informal, straightforward, and unpredictable (Jones & Rowely , 2011).

A study by Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono (2019) demonstrates a correlation between a restaurant's success and their Instagram marketing strategy. After its inception in 2010, Instagram positioned itself as a norm of advertising for all businesses due to its convenience and impact on people's daily lives (Driver, 2019). However, as a result of frequent Instagram utilization, capturing consumer attention is a new challenge presented for current and upcoming businesses (Ha & McCan, 2008). According to Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono (2019), Instagram is considered among the leading advertising platforms for small to medium enterprises (SMEs), however users are currently bombarded with advertisements and tend to view only a few of them. Therefore, to break through the clutter, marketers need to design ads that can stop users and hold their attention long enough to process the ads cognitively before scrolling up or down to see other photos (Lee & Kim, 2020).

1.1 Background to Research Area:

Advertisement clutter occurs when the number of advertisements in an editorial media vehicle such as social media or outdoor advertising exceeds a consumer's acceptance level. This is viewed as an undesirable phenomenon by both advertisers and consumers because it creates redundancy (Ha & Litman, 1997). Consumers look at social media advertisements for an average of 4.1 seconds, so there is little chance for marketers in capturing their attention (EyeSee, 2019). Because attention is the cognitive gateway to further information processing, such as attitude and behavioral intention, it is crucial to comprehend the mechanisms underlying consumer attention in the overloaded social media environment. According to this context, capturing consumer attention is becoming exceedingly challenging for new SMEs in a cluttered advertising environment such as Instagram.

Conventionally, visual attention can be captured in two forms (Top-down & Bottom-up processing) (Wickens & McCarley, 2008). Top-down processing in visual attention is when an individual's attention is captured by expectations or prior knowledge. For example, a person with good knowledge on automobiles will be attentive to an automobile advertisement when visually presented. In other words, his or her attentional guidance is based on prior knowledge of the automobiles. Contrastingly, Bottom-up processing in visual attention refers to attentional capture that is based purely on a stimulus with features that are salient and (stand out), however saliency can be subjective between viewers (Tsotsos, 2011). In the context of social media marketing, activating bottom-up processing in cluttered environments such as Instagram is pivotal for SMEs as consumers are conditioned from a top-down perspective to scroll past advertisements (Kim & Kim, 2018).

While marketing is important in successful organizations, it might be argued that new small businesses need marketing even more. The survival of many small enterprises might frequently depend on the loss or gain of a single customer (Abbasi, et al., 2022). Researchers have noticed that traditional marketing techniques are not always available or suitable for entrepreneurial businesses, which also known as new ventures (Becherer & Helms, 2016). A startup business initiative is more likely to encounter both unsure market conditions and limited resources simply because of its youth. In the face of such limitations, the entrepreneur must employ creative marketing strategies when chasing a market share in competitive industries (Becherer & Helms, 2016). A competitive industry is one in which an organization must contend with rival firms (Thong & Yap, 1995). As mentioned earlier the food industry is one of the most prominent industries on Instagram hence brands are compelled to adopt new technologies by competition in order to stay competitive and break through the clutter (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019). Additionally, consumers today are getting more perceptive (Brown S. , 2007), and they are able to easily identify marketers' motives for product promotion and sales. The majority of consumers are tired of marketing efforts like PR and advertising (Kirby & Mardsen, 2016) hence, they consequently pay little attention to or perhaps ignore an advertisement.

In order for new small businesses to capture consumer attention in a cluttered environment, entrepreneurs should follow a "big picture" approach and concentrate on innovative methods for building value for consumers, managing risks, and innovation. This approach is connected with marketing activities in small firms that have limited resources and therefore must rely on creative and unconventional tactics (Dushi et al., 2019).

The core element of marketing communications asserts that persuasive messages that are in line with consumers' views and knowledge are more likely to be pertinent, understandable, and alluring (Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan 1991; Keller 2003; Petty and Wegener 1986). In essence, it is thought that the degree of match between consumer beliefs and communication content determines how convincing a message will be (Brannon & Brock, 2001). However, evidence from cognitive psychology casts doubt on the aforementioned claim, stating that incongruent communication might result in more favorable reactions (Mandler 1982; Fiske & Taylor 1991). According to schema-based research, incongruent inputs may raise the cognitive arousal of the recipient and, when inconsistencies are effectively resolved, may elicit more favorable responses by consumers.

Ironic advertising is a schema incongruent driven approach that has the potential activate bottom-up attention processing, as Proctor and Kitchen (2002) noted. Irony is described as "the use of words to express anything other than the literal meaning and especially the reverse of the literal meaning" in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary from 2013. According to this broad definition of irony, ironic advertising is when a statement in a commercial has a different connotation from what it actually implies. The literal meaning frequently contrasts with the true meaning (Stern, 1990).

According to Proctor and Kitchen (2002), ironic marketing could be a useful strategy for connecting with these marketing-savvy individuals and is frequently utilized to capture consumers' attention since it is regarded as uncommon and distinctive when compared to traditional advertising. This research employs ironic ads on Instagram as a tool that can be used by entrepreneurs as an innovative marketing approach before launching their new business venture. Ironic ads play a critical role in this research as it is employed as an independent variable to activating bottom-up attention. This research empirically validates the effectiveness of ironic ads along with opinion leaders into positively influencing the intention to explore the brands Instagram page, intention to engage, and intention to purchase.

This study only looks into the middle eastern food & beverage sector that involves Arab countries, which are Yemen, Palestine, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Syria (World Bank, 2019).

According to Bastian and Tucci (2017), Islam is the major religion in the middle eastern region and has a significant impact on social behavior and society. These nations have comparable political structures that are influenced by collectivism, tribalism, and theocracies (Ahmed, 2011). They also have significant social and cultural elements, such as confessional groups, familial clans, and collectivism (Bastian & Zali, 2016). Furthermore, alcohol drinking is strictly prohibited in the Islamic religion hence in accordance to the focus on the food & beverage sector, alcohol beverages are excluded from this study.

1.2 Research Problem Statement:

Numerous studies have addressed the difficulties that SMEs face in the middle east (Zutshi, Mendy, Sharma, Thomas, & Sarker, 2021). According to Al Tit, Omri, & Euchi, (2019), there are four primary issues that SMEs face: first, financial resource-related issues, such as time-consuming loan applications and lengthy guarantees; second, a lack of critical knowledge about local, regional, and global market variables and shifting conditions; third, entrepreneurs' inability to reach customers outside of their local markets, whether regional or global, because they lack marketing strategies; and, last, a lack of managerial skills in areas like human, financial, and administrative fields. In a similar vein, Alqassabi, (2020) noted that SMEs encounter a number of obstacles that impede their growth and success. The deficiency of managerial abilities among driven entrepreneurs is one such barrier. These managers don't have the abilities nor skills needed to advance the business, which leads to inefficient use of the company's resources—financial, human, and otherwise. Lack of marketing plans, a poor comprehension of the industry they operate in, and competition against well established companies are three other pitfalls for small businesses in the middle east (Albalushi & Naqshbandi, 2022). Inadequate understanding of the market may be contributing to the poor marketing results hence a proper marketing guideline for new entrepreneurs is required.

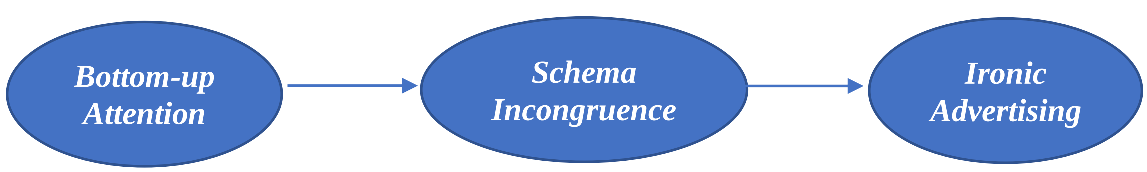
Some companies are unable to sustain continuous growth or expansion because they have not conducted a thorough analysis of every facet of the market. Alqassabi, (2020) also mentions the lack of funding, which has a direct impact on an organization's capacity to supply other essentials like infrastructure and technology. This study dives deeper into the problem of lack of marketing plans and poor comprehension of the middle eastern market by providing a tested approach on how to optimize marketing results in the middle east, more specifically the food and beverage sector which is regarded as the largest economic sector after the oil sector (Statista, 2024).

According to Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono (2019), Instagram is considered among the leading advertising platforms for small to medium enterprises (SMEs), however users are currently bombarded with advertisements and tend to view only a few of them. According to this context, capturing consumer attention worldwide is becoming exceedingly challenging for new SMEs in a cluttered advertising environment such as Instagram. Additionally, consumers today are getting more perceptive (Brown S. , 2007), and they are able to easily identify marketers' motives for product promotion and sales. The majority of consumers are tired of marketing efforts like PR and advertising (Kirby & Mardsen, 2016) hence, they consequently pay little attention to or perhaps ignore an advertisement. Researchers have noticed that traditional marketing techniques are not always available or suitable for entrepreneurial businesses, which are also known as new ventures (Abbasi, et al., 2022). As mentioned earlier the food industry in the middle east is one of the most competitive industries on Instagram hence brands are compelled to adopt new strategies (Albalushi & Naqshbandi, 2022).

The research study explores how small businesses can capture F&B consumers' attention on Instagram using pre-launch entrepreneurial marketing in correlation to the bottom-up processing theory. Instagram users are conditioned from a top-down processing perspective to steer clear of advertisements because they encounter them so often (Thakur, 2022). This study argues that in order for a new restaurant to build an effective pre-launch marketing campaign that captures consumers' attention, it must have salient features along with trusted opinion leaders that are in the forefront of the pre-launch campaign. Therefore, the selected independent variable that contributes to bottom-up attention is ironic advertising, in parallel three types of opinion leaders are tested (Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers) to find who is most effective in luring consumers to explore the Instagram page of a small business.

1.3 Research Gaps:

- **Theoretical Gap (1):** The application of schema incongruence theory in advertisements to capture attention is widely used and successful (Gerrath & Biraglia, 2021); however, studies have not contributed to bottom-up attention processing which is how schema incongruence is derived. Bottom-up attention allows consumers to cognitively process the incongruent advertisements and unlike top-down attention it is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention (Schrej, Owens , & Theeuwes, 2008). Success in the food & beverage sector is highly correlated to activating bottom-up consumer attention due to the high level of competitiveness and stimulus presented on Instagram (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019).



- **Theoretical Gap (2):** Studies have promoted the use of ironic ads to tackle the vexation caused by advertising clutter on social media & outdoor advertising (Kim & Kim, 2018), however none have tested the success of an ironic ad in a cluttered environment in order to test its effectiveness. The lack of stimulus presented to the participants regardless of the context minimizes the credibility of current studies. Advertising clutter is defined as the excessive amount of advertising messages customers receive every day, therefore for an ironic advertisement to be effective it must be tested in an environment with excessive ads (Ha & Litman, 1997).
- **Theoretical Gap (3):** Some studies, have explored the use of opinion formers in the context of independent restaurants, however opinion leaders have multiple classifications on social media. Studies have not measured the effectiveness of different types of opinion leaders in the middle eastern food & beverage sector (Leung , Sun, & Asswailem, 2022). New businesses demand effectiveness and value for money when hiring an opinion leader to promote their brand hence it is critical for marketers and practitioners to have an insight on who is most suitable for their brand. This is done by testing how middle eastern consumers react to promotions from each type of opinion formers whether they are a (Celebrity Chef, Food Blogger, Social Media Influencer).

1.4 Research Aim, Questions, & Objectives:

Given the importance of pre-launch marketing and establishing empirically validated attention capturing stimuli, the overall research aim of this study is:

To investigate the role of pre-launch marketing in attracting food and beverage consumers on Instagram in relation to the bottom-up attention processing theory. Furthermore, this study investigates the role opinion leaders play for new restaurants in having expertise and reliability to being the forefront of their pre-launch marketing campaign. This is completed through a holistic framework that begins by identifying attention drivers, leading to consumer purchase intention.

Based on the literature of pre-launch marketing concepts, attention drivers, and the influence of opinion leaders on consumers, the aim of this research study is:

Research Aim: To build a Pre-Launch marketing communication model for small businesses that is tailored for the middle eastern food & beverage sector.

Thus, this research combines various concepts in capturing attention in a cluttered Instagram environment and identifying credible opinion leaders through a novel approach that can be utilized by small to medium enterprises. This is done by incorporating schema incongruity theory and the examination of attention from an experimental perspective. This was assisted by gathering opinions of Instagram users, through three different approaches. Furthermore, the researcher relayed on the academic literature in identifying the gaps which provided helpful insights into shaping this research as well as gathering the opinions of the common middle eastern consumer.

In addressing the above, this research proposes and validates a framework for pre-launch marketing in the middle eastern food and beverage sector. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following **research questions** (RQ):

1. RQ1: What is the role of bottom-up attention and schema incongruity theory within the Pre-Launch marketing communication model (H1a-H1b)?
2. RQ2: What is the role of opinion formers (Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers) within building a successful pre-launch campaign (H2a-H2c)?
3. RQ3: What are the factors leading to a successful Pre-Launch marketing campaign and how do these factors interact (H1-H5)?

Therefore, by researching the above questions this study provides insight on the impact of bottom-up processing in capturing consumer attention along with identifying the role of opinion leaders within building a successful pre-launch marketing campaign and how all the constructs work holistically with a framework.

The **research objectives** of this study are:

1. To investigate the impact of an incongruent stimuli in capturing attention through cluttered Instagram advertising known as bottom attention processing to answer **RQ1**.
2. To identify the most suited type of opinion formers to positively influence consumer behavior for the middle eastern food and beverage sector to answer **RQ2**.

3. To develop a holistic conceptual model that assists small businesses in gaining visibility, positively influencing the consumers' intention to explore, engage, and purchase **RQ3**.

1.5 Thesis Outline and Summary:

In the first chapter, the topic is introduced, the thesis is summarized, and the rationale for choosing the current study is explained. The research topics and the thesis's goals are also highlighted in this chapter. Additionally identified, are the study's originality and scholarly impact. The literature review section will discuss the relevant theories to this research such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) & Elaboration Likely Hood Model (ELM), (AIDA). Then it will deeply discuss the theories and methods used in this study that are Advertising Clutter, Schema Incongruity Theory, Bottom-up Attention, and Pre-Launch Marketing. The literature review chapter also concludes with a list of remarks and limitations on studies similar to this thesis.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation for the study's methodological approach. The research questions and literature review comprehension that support the significance of this thesis are the basis for the research philosophy and research approach explained in the third chapter. The study's methodology, research design, and statistical methods are described. The first section discusses the ontological and epistemological problems that underlie the study technique. To demonstrate the practicality and applicability of the three phases to this methodology and how they meet the research objectives, a graphic presentation of the justification for the selected research design is given.

The qualitative research findings from the focus group semi-structured interviews are analyzed and discussed in Chapter 4. In order to help create items for measurement in the experiment design and questionnaire formulation for the second and third stage of data collection, thematic analysis was carried out using Nvivo analysis software, and nodes were assigned to define the constructs. The results of the qualitative data are thoroughly examined in order to give readers a comprehensive grasp of attention drivers in a cluttered Instagram setting from the viewpoints of middle eastern consumers as well as from the literature. There is also discussion of how build a successful pre-launch marketing campaign in the food and beverage sector. The formulation of the hypotheses utilized in the survey design brings the chapter to a close.

The focus group interviews paved the way for the commencement of chapter 5. The need for conducting experimental design stems from the validation of irony as an attention driver in cluttered Instagram settings. Chapter 5 provides a thorough explanation of the stages the researcher underwent starting from the pilot studies reaching the analysis and empirical validation of irony as an attention driver.

Chapter 6 is the quantitative research chapter which analyses and discusses the findings of the questionnaire. The developed theoretical framework is validated and discussed, to do so Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis was used to confirm or reject the research hypotheses using AMOS. The chapter is concluded with the discussion of the findings of the questionnaire along with mediation and moderation results.

The final part of this thesis, chapter 7, is divided into three components. The first section focuses on the improved model and explains its rationale, showing how it adds to the body of knowledge on the aspects and dimensions of attention drivers and they're crucial for a pre-launch marketing campaign. The study's theoretical, methodological, and managerial implications are covered in the second half of this chapter. The third section outlines the study's shortcomings and highlights how further research can be useful in addressing and expanding on the study's findings.

Chapter 2. Literature Review:

Social media provides an opportunity for businesses to prosper in numerous aspects, however due to market saturation it evolved as a daunting challenge since brand messages became more likely to be buried in the clutter. The following chapter firstly discusses the evolution of technology and advertising theories and critiques them in terms of strengths and limitations in correlation to this research. The theories included in this chapter are the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Fred, 1989), Elaboration Likely Hood model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981), and the AIDA theory (Strong, 1925). Secondly, this chapter provides a deep understanding of Schema Congruence Theory, Pre-Launch Marketing, Attention Processing, and how they are contributing to this study. Lastly this chapter also includes a summary of the research gaps for the current stream of literature.

2.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Before technology paved the way for businesses and entered people's everyday life, there was a growing necessity for comprehending whether it will be accepted or rejected by the general public as humans tend to resist new changes to the way they do things (Marangunic´ & Granic´, 2013). The TAM theory by Fred Davis (1986) presented itself as a direction for upcoming technologies to follow in order to gain the public's approval. The theory was originally derived from the theory of planned behavior TPB (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980) ,which was one of the first that attempted to predict and understand people's behavior and attitudes. The TPB was originally an extension to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), however it still had major limitations. TPB will only work under the assumption that human beings, are prudent and reasonable in their decision without considering unconscious motives that may have an influence on their actual behavior which limits the model to prudent individuals only (Mathieson, 1991) . Another limitation that presents itself is the exclusion of demographic factors since humans would react differently to change based on their origins and background (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007).

Despite the aforementioned limitations, both the TRA and the TPB provided useful models that could explain and predict the actual behavior of the individual (Marangunic´ & Granic´, 2013). Nevertheless, as we have progressed technologically most of the studies using those theories failed to produce reliable results on whether a new technology would be accepted or rejected (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007) . Fred Davis adapted the theories of reasoned action, planned behavior and proposed the TAM framework (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007). This adoption included two changes to the TRA and TPB models by excluding subjective norms into predicting behavior and including two distinct beliefs, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, that were believed to be sufficient to predict attitude towards the use of technology.

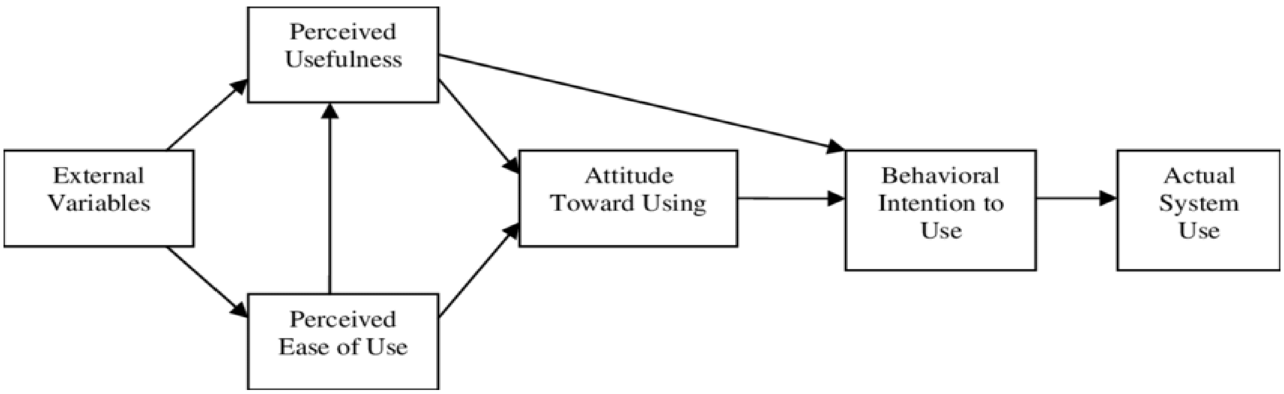


Figure 1: The Technology Acceptance Model

The original TAM model was applied by multiple researchers and experienced various extensions, reaching the TAM 2 model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Between the years (1990-2011) plenty of studies have addressed different application of TAM on areas such as information and computer technology (Marangunic´ & Granic´, 2013). TAM was utilized to predict acceptance of information security technology (Hu, Lin, & Chen, 2005). Furthermore, an extended version of TAM was used to predict the acceptance of health care information systems (Pai & Huang, 2011) and clinical information systems (Melas, Dimopoulou, & Moustakis, 2011).

As we are evolving, using technology became a social norm. Mainly when it comes to communicating as a brand or as an individual, social media became part of our daily lives hence the need for justifying whether it will be acceptable or not may not be applicable at this time. Numerous studies applied TAM, to explore how our ideology changed and identified factors on why social media become accepted and favorable by society (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014) (Lee & Lee , 2019) (Dhume, Pattanshetti, Kamble, & Prasad, 2012). The challenge currently presented is on who we prefer to follow in a very saturated environment such as Instagram (Lee &

Kim, 2020), hence the application of TAM on measuring consumer following behavior would not be the best practice. The literature demonstrates that the model is limited to only assessing behavior towards new systems, and Instagram is already one of the most downloaded applications to ever exist (Crowd Analyzer, 2022). According to this context TAM was eliminated as a candidate that can be used to understand consumer following behavior on Instagram.

2.2 Elaboration Likelihood model (ELM)

Despite the introduction of the TRA and its extensions by Fishbein and Ajzen (1972), Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and later Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), the field of persuasion on forming consumer attitude was still considered academically deficient due to the lack of understanding in the area of attitude change (Kitchen, et al., 2014). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1981) captured noticeable attention when it was presented, making it one of the first theories of persuasion that offered a comprehensive method of understanding attitude change. The ELM model is a persuasion framework that is argued to be applicable in multiple contexts (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and carried on to be used by advertising researchers when studying attitudinal change, which is assumed to be the process by which externally generated persuasion occurs (Kitchen, et al., 2014).

The postulate of the ELM is presented through two paths that lead to persuasion: the central and peripheral routes. The central route is activated when elaboration likelihood is high, this indicates that the message was delivered through credible sources with detailed information and valid arguments to persuade potential consumers (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1989). Contrastingly, the peripheral route uses positive association with cues such as beauty, fame, and positive emotions in messages to persuade consumers (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Furthermore, the peripheral route to persuasion requires little cognitive effort, unlike the central route that relays on cues such as source credibility and heuristics.

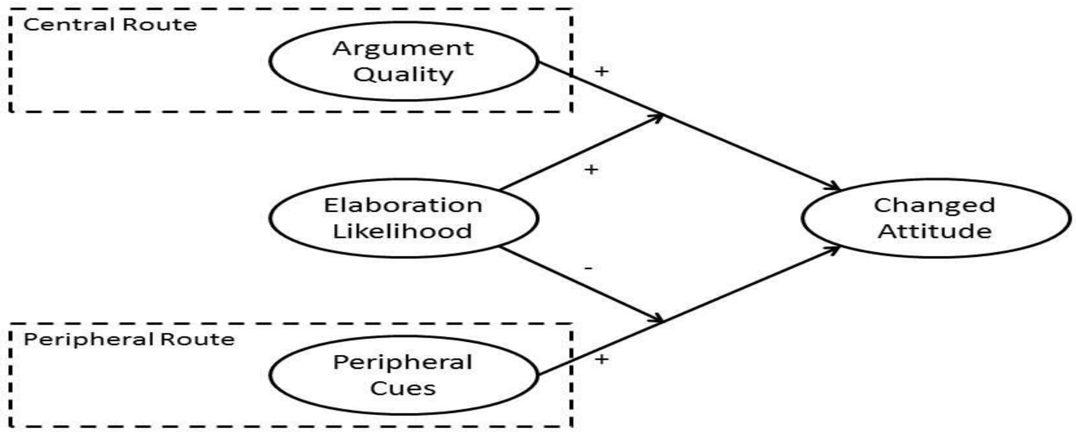


Figure 2: The Elaboration Likelihood Model

At the ELM's inception stages, both paths (Central & Peripheral) were considered mutually exclusive meaning the message recipients were unable to process central and peripheral cues simultaneously (Schumann, et al., 2011). From a theoretical perspective, the issue of multi-channel processing has been viewed as a deficiency in the ELM model (Bitner & Obermiller, 1985). Furthermore, Stiff (1986) questioned the validity of the ELM framework due to the exclusion of interactivity between the central and peripheral routes. From a practical perspective, doubts about the application of the ELM have been raised (Szczepanski, 2006) and further weaknesses have become evident over the years.

Numerous replications of the ELM appeared shortly after its development. Those studies focused on integrating a portion, variable, or construct of the ELM (Kang and Herr, 2006; Te'eni-Harari et al., 2007; Trampe et al., 2010). It's safe to say that without exception, all the studies questioned the model's validity. For example, a study reported by (Cole et al., 1990) replicated the ELM closely, however the results provided little to no support for the model's postulates. The study was conducted with minor product changes in comparison to the products used by Petty and Cacioppo (1981), therefore the ELM should be vigorous enough in handling minor product alterations (Cole et al., 1990). Furthermore, the ELM model was developed in the 1980s therefore, if a brand uses the ELM framework for planning their marketing strategy, it is likely that they may be looking at the market through a 1980s lens. This lens may not be receptive to the current technological advancements which has empowered consumers (Kitchen, et al., 2014). The food & beverage sector in the middle east, is considered hedonic therefore using the ELM which includes a central route may be considered purposeless since central routes can be argued to be correlated with utilitarian products (Hedhli & Zourrig, 2023). With these doubts in mind, the ELM was excluded as a model that will assist in understanding consumer following behavior on Instagram.

2.3 AIDA

Although AIDA is renounced to being incepted by Strong (1925), it was actually in 1898 when Elmo Lewi (1898) proposed the first advertising theory. The acronym AIDA refers to Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, and those four cognitive stages in that order describe how an individual would react upon receipt of a new idea or a new product purchased (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011). In going through these phases, consumers who are exposed to the first stage (Attention) will tend to gradually decrease as they reach the final phase (Action). Firstly, a vast number of possible purchasers become aware or attentive of a product or brand; secondly, a smaller amount is actually interested hence they pursue more information; and thirdly an even smaller subset will carry on to complete the purchase (Peterson, 1949). Although AIDA has positioned itself as one of the earliest consumer psychological transformation models (Kojima et al., 2010), it has been criticized for its insufficiency in reflecting the behavior of an individual (Bendixen, 1993). In a bid to overcome the deficiencies of AIDA, this study takes a novel approach by incorporating Schema Congruity theory into AIDA and applying the model to a more updated context such as Instagram.

2.3.1 Limitations of AIDA:

This study acknowledges that advertising is only one of many other aspects that lead to purchase. Hierarchy-of-advertising-effects models such as AIDA are portrayed as the sole power behind purchase, and that is far from the truth (Colley & Russell, 1961), (Lavidge et al., 1961), and (Dutka & Solomon, 1995). For example, Colley & Russell (1961) identify some of the other marketing factors that also contribute to the final sale: The product must be competitively excellent; it must be conveniently available to consumers; its package design must be attractive and appropriately functional; it must be supported by personal selling (as necessary), supported by promotion, and supported by publicity; it must be priced competitively; and so on. Beyond these product-intrinsic factors, there are other extrinsic factors affecting specific brand sales over which the marketer has no control, such as competitive activity, the economic climate, and so forth. Accordingly, this study does not by any mean claim that AIDA or any other hierarchy of advertising model is solely responsible for purchase. To overcome the scarcity beyond advertising this study discusses key product and service elements that are essential for the success of a startup restaurant.

The second component that is missing in the AIDA framework is an updated context for new technologies such as social media. As far as our knowledge, its applicability in the context of strategic use of social media remains limited and certainly requires extensive research (Hassan et al., 2015 ; Mumtaz, 2019). This study contributes to social media literature by being the first study that explores the applicability of the AIDA framework on Instagram’s food & beverage sector in the Middle East.

Thirdly, due to the very limited AIDA applications on social media there has been no studies that provided strategies on how to utilize AIDA on Instagram. Hassan et al., (2015) conducted a study that proposes a strategy for using social media as a marketing tool for small businesses. The study was one of the first who attempted to explore the AIDA application on social media, however it was broad and subjective. Although social media platforms are very diverse, the study referred to social media as a singular and was generic in referring to their strategies as a one fits all for all business sectors. Results were collected through focus groups and they demonstrated strategies for each phase of AIDA (ex. For Attention, businesses should use search engines to locate customers and so on), however the results are considered limited because they cannot apply to all platforms. Furthermore, in efforts to explore AIDA through a narrower lens, (Gupta et al., 2017) evaluated the importance of YouTube as a multimedia tool through the AIDA framework. In comparison to (Hassan et al., 2015), this study provided its own framework and evaluated its effectiveness through content analysis. Content analysis is described as the scientific study of content of communication. It is a popular research technique used when the advertising content to be analyzed is huge (Prasad, 2008). The authors analyzed YouTube advertisements through content analysis and determined a positive correlation between their framework and the advertisement through likes and views. Although this study was specific in selecting YouTube advertisements, it is still considered a generic approach in terms of identifying all brands as one in their framework. In hopes of providing a more pragmatic approach, this study is one of the first to introduce strategies for building Instagram campaigns for small businesses in a pre-launch and post launch stage, whilst focusing on one of the most booming sectors on social media that is the food & beverage sector.

2.4 Social media advertising:

Social media is becoming more and more integrated into every part of our life. As a result, users of the main social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Twitter—are more perceptually and behaviorally engaged with the aforementioned platforms (Kapoor et al., 2017; Kim and Kim, 2018) This has created a significant impact on how we engage with friends and both public and private institutions (Alalwan, 2018).

Social media platforms, in fact, offer an exciting new place for people, groups, and even governments to engage in social, political, commercial, and educational interactions as well as the exchange of ideas, information, goods, and services (Vel & Kerrie, 2013). For this reason, businesses all over the world begun to consider how these platforms could be used to draw in clients and develop lucrative marketing relationships (Alalwan, Rana, Algharabat, & Tahrini, 2016). The substantial sums of money that companies spend on advertising campaigns are another indication of this interest (Alalwan, 2018). However, this raises the question of how effective are those marketing campaigns. More importantly, the challenge for marketers is to consistently figure out how to produce and arrange these social media ads in a way that increases their effectiveness and appeal (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019). Similar to this, the middle east is regarded as one of the nations with the fastest-growing social media user base, and businesses in that region have a particular interest in engaging in social media marketing initiatives (Crowd Analyzer, 2022).

Social media advertisements allow users to interact with them differently and have various experiences. This is a result of social media advertisements' ability to encourage greater customer interaction through liking, sharing, commenting, posting, and learning about the targeted ads (Kim, Zihang, & Shoenberger, 2023; Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). Therefore, as Logan et al. (2012) pointed out, there has been a need in recent years to carry out additional research on such events. Actually, academics should concentrate more on identifying the key factors that may affect how consumers respond to and perceive social media advertisements (Madio & Quinn, 2024; Oh & Syn, 2015).

In line with Tuten and Solomon (2017), one of the main aims of using social media for advertisements and communication is to shape the consumer's decision-making process. Therefore, this study attempts to identify and examine what triggers purchase intention by understanding what captures consumer attention to those advertisements.

2.5 Advertising Clutter:

Advertisement clutter is an undesirable phenomenon by both advertisers and consumers that occurs when the number of advertisements in an editorial media vehicle such as social media or outdoor advertising exceeds a consumer's acceptance level because of redundancy (Ha & Litman, 1997). There are three factors that make up this phenomenon: competitiveness, intrusiveness and quantity. According to Ha & Litman (1997), the term "competitiveness" refers to how similar the marketed product categories are to each other. On the other hand, "intrusiveness" is when consumers read, watch, or listen to advertisements that can be forced or distracting. Due to the forced nature of ad exposure (such as pop-up ads) and the advancement of technology, intrusiveness has received increased attention in research (Belanche et al., 2019; Goodrich et al., 2015; Ha and McCann, 2008). "Quantity" is the total amount of advertisements, which could be viewed as a percentage of editorial content-related advertisements. Increased ad quantity has long been considered as the primary factor for clutter (e.g. Ha and McCann, 2008; and Ha & Litman, 1997) is more relevant to the social media context due to the drastic growth of social media as an ad outlet. Primarily (competitiveness & ad quantity), are the most relevant to Instagram, for example: products or services from the same sector are continuously viewed to consumers based on the consumers' algorithm which creates a competitive environment. Furthermore, the growth of Instagram as an ad outlet is increasing the ad quantity presented on the platform (Jung & Heo, 2021).

According to the theory of limited capacity, overloading consumers with information may lead to overstimulation, which impacts the process of information processing (May et al., 1999). According to the idea of selective exposure, consumers pay more attention to personally relevant advertisements, indicating that low ad effectiveness results from a lack of personal relevance for the consumer rather than clutter (Smith & Darley, 1993). While the theory has been used to explain why consumers have negative attitudes toward an attempt at persuasion, like advertising, the cluttered ad environment would also obstruct consumers' choice of information (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), and thus contribute to their negative responses to advertising, including ad avoidance and negative emotion (Hu & Wise, 2021).

2.5.1 Advertising clutter and Attention:

There is a general agreement in the literature that advertising clutter reduces the degree of attentiveness to advertisements, as evidenced by decreased recall and recognition (Jeong et al., 2011; Nelson-Field et al., 2013; Riebe & Dawes, 2006; Zanjani et al., 2011), a negative attitude toward the advertisement (Ha & Litman, 1997; Kim & Sundar, 2010), increased ad avoidance (Cho & Cheon, 2004).

According to Radvansky & Ashcraft (2009), attention is a mental activity that consumers utilize to focus on a stimulus such as advertisements, and it is a requirement for an advertisement to be noticed or recalled (Lee & Ahn, 2012). Despite the significance of attention in advertising, few studies have looked at ad attention in connection to ad clutter, and those that have done so have found mixed results. For instance, a previous study by Webb (1979) discovered that television ads received less attention in a setting that was more congested than the usual clutter condition.

Hossain (2012) acknowledged that clutter has a detrimental impact on newspaper ad attention since people are unaware of it. On the other hand, Hammer et al. (2009) hypothesized, that consumers in high clutter conditions are more likely to see/hear more advertisements but less likely to recall the advertisements. Although the relationship between clutter and attention has received less attention, many research has focused on memory obstruction or interference (e.g. Riebe & Dawes, 2006; Rosengren & Söderlund, 2008). Investigation into how busy ad settings affect how consumers understand advertisements is necessary given the dearth of evidence. In order to for entrepreneurs to tackle advertising clutter on Instagram, this study investigates the different types of attention and how entrepreneurs can use them to their advantage.

2.5.2 Types of Attention Processing:

Currently, the literature frequently distinguishes between two forms of attention: bottom-up and top-down attention, or stimulus-driven and goal-oriented attention (Carrasco, 2011; Corbetta & Shulman, 2002; Kastner & Ungerleider, 2000). Top-down attention is the voluntarily focused attention on particular characteristics, objects, or geographic areas in space. For instance, a subject may choose to focus on all red things or a small area of space in the upper-left corner. The first scenario demonstrates top-down spatial attention, while the second case demonstrates top-down feature attention, and what they have in common is that in both the subject is choosing what to focus on (Beauchamp, Cox, & Deyoe, 1997; Bressler et al., 2008). Contrastingly, bottom-up attention is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). For instance, a loud bang could draw attention if the subject is speaking when it occurs. Or, in the visual domain, a person might be searching for red objects, but an unexpected, sudden appearance of a strange object may unintentionally catch their attention. Further research on the field of attention classifies bottom-up attention as a mental process activated by the stimulus itself, especially if the visual stimuli has distinctive features such as (color and motion). Distinctly, "mental state" can influence attention as a top-down factor (e.g., the mentality and motivation) (Mortier, Donk, & Theeuwes, 2003).

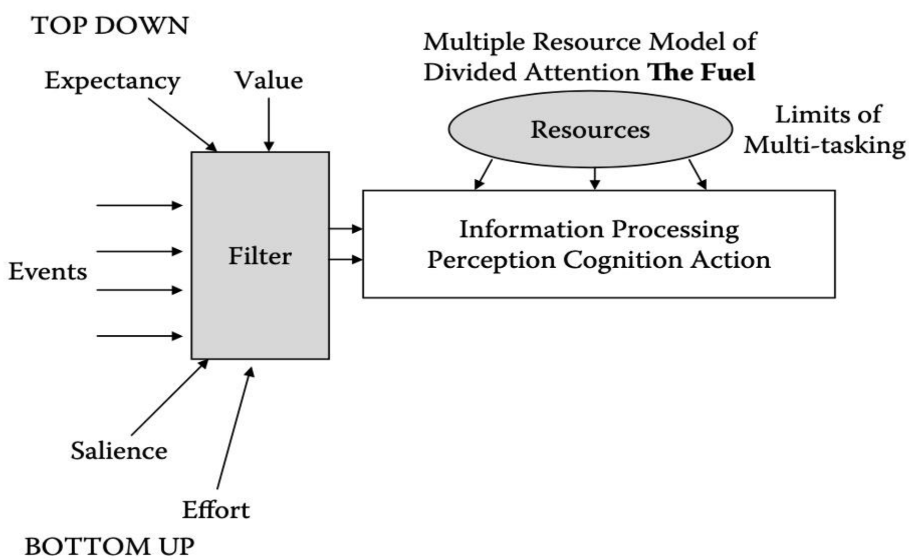


Figure 3: Model of Attention (Wickens & McCarley, 2008)

2.5.3 Attention processing in advertising:

For most users Instagram's food advertising is largely motivated by hedonistic states, including social need fulfillment, the building of an online persona, self-expression, and escapism (Lee et al., 2016). Consumers are unlikely to display top-down attention processing throughout this period since there is no pre designated target to attend. In order for a user to activate bottom-up processing rather than continuously scrolling, a salient stimulus must be incorporated. Contrastingly research on online advertisements that concentrate on top-down processing focus on elements like involvement, purpose, and cognitive style that would influence a user's attention to the advertisement. According to Kim and Lee’s (2011) study, a user conducting an exploratory search would focus more on the advertisement than a person conducting a goal-directed search as the latter already has their mind set on their needs from a top down perspective. Attention in the field of advertising has been investigated through many platforms one of them being web directory advertisements (Cao, Qu, Duffy, & Ding, 2019). An experimental study investigating eye fixation on web directory advertisements revealed that the ad location and salient colors of the advertisement did not influence the location of the first fixation. The location of users’ first-fixations was the center of the screen. The researchers concluded that participants were following a top down process in their eye fixation regardless of the ad style and ad color. The web directory advertisements were placed in the corners, however the first fixation remained in the middle of the screen (Cao, Qu, Duffy, & Ding, 2019). Another eye tracking experiment by Lee & Ahn, (2012) investigated attention to internet banner ads between animated and non animated banners. Suprisingly the researchers found that animated ads drive consumer attention away. Participants were goal oriented when it came to their internet searches, not attending the bottom-up stimulus that is animated ads. Furthermore, the animated banner ads were attended later in the internet browsing process however they were not remembered after the experiment was completed. Moving on to eye tracking experimental designs outside the internet Peschel, Orquin, & Loose, (2019) explored whether increasing the visibility of a food product label through adding salient features or increasing logo size, can enhance attention capture and choice of that product. Results indicate that logo size does in fact trigger consumers’ bottom up attention however the incorprated salient features within the product label did not capture attention as anticipated. Reasearchers concluded that as part of the study’s limiatations, incorpeating salient features other than logo design may be useful for future researchers. One thing all the previous studies have in common along with all the vast majority of studies on attention is the use of eye-tracking and eye fixation as a measure of attention. For this study the salient stimulus used to activate bottom-up attention processing is ironic advertising, and this study employs a novel approach in measuring consumer attention to advertisements.

2.6 Ironic Advertising:

Empirical studies on ironic messages in advertising are scarce, despite the fact that numerous advertisers employ them to capture the audience's attention (Kim & Kim, 2018). In the context of rhetorical irony, Stern (1990) defined ironic advertising as "any remark that conveys a meaning distinct from the one it pretends to deliver". Additionally, she pointed out that there is a contradiction between what is said and what is meant in ironic advertising. More recently, Pehlivan et al. (2011) sought to develop an ironic advertising theory by defining ironic advertising based on Muecke's (1982) work. Based on the research conducted by Pehlivan et al. (2011), the authors defined ironic advertising as "a two-step process in which a marketer first establishes an initial message or invokes a pre-existing frame in the viewer's mind, and then communicates a second message that subverts that first message or frame."

Stern (1990) carried out interdisciplinary research on this subject to pinpoint the characteristics of ironic advertising. In conclusion, ironic advertising aims to influence viewers by conveying a concealed meaning in a clever way. She also distinguished between humor and irony in advertising. To make people laugh, humor advertising uses "funny laugh-proving slapstick," "absurdist grotesque execution," or specific "wordplay" (Stern 1990). So, the goal of humor advertising is to purposefully make the audience laugh. Whilst ironic advertising frequently and accidentally makes viewers laugh, humor is not always an intended outcome of ironic advertising (Schlinger, 1979). Another fundamental distinction between humor and ironic advertising is that while humor advertising typically does not rely on the audience's capacity for intellectual engagement, ironic advertising does. The above illustrates that it’s not possible to include all forms of irony in one simple definition. Not even the common definition of irony as ‘saying the opposite of what you mean’ covers all cases. Moreover, many expressions of irony are not verbal.

Ads that use irony or sarcasm run the danger of being misinterpreted or worse, condemned in public. Take the slogan "No more hangovers" from an Axe shower gel campaign. An image of a brand-new, fizzy shower gel bottle is displayed. Considering the accompanying text, a new substance will take the edge off hangovers. Axe's PR officer acknowledged that the commercial was meant to be humorous and that the product had not been tested when a reporter from a national Dutch daily (Devolkskrant, 2003) attempted to inquire about this. Empirically a study by Kim & Kim, (2018) demonstrated the effectiveness of ironic ads by experimenting the difference between targeted ironic ads vs non ironic ads for high tech products such as audible books, however there is always a gap concerned with having the same positive results for other sectors and other advertising platforms such as social media. Furthermore, the lack of stimulus presented to the participants is also worth mentioning. Four non ironic advertisements to only one ironic ad is not enough to declare effectiveness in cluttered environments (Brown & Rothschild, 1993). Lagerwerf (2007) experimented the effectiveness of ironic ads through magazine advertising. In comparasion with Kim & Kim, (2018), the study measured consumers' reaction to 12 ironic ads and 6 sarcastic ads individually across 2 studies. As quoted from Lagerwerf (2007) "For possible directions for future research. One is to find additional mechanisms of irony use in advertisements". Irony and sarcasm were measured through the exact same constructs; however, results were irrespective of the effects intended by the writer. The study was deemed ineffective as participants faced difficulties understanding the ads due to the lack of clarity in advertisements.

This study characterized ironic advertising as an advertisement that uses a headline that deviates from the viewers' common understanding. Traditional advertising, on the other hand, is operationalized as an advertisement with a headline that conforms to viewers' understanding of convention and has the same meaning as the advertisement's body copy (Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci , 1998). In this regard, it's critical to comprehend how incongruity contributes to the development of ironic advertising messaging. The process through which ironic advertising is perceived and comprehended by the subjects is covered in the next section. Additionally, utilizing the notion of schema incongruity, this research investigates how the incongruent context in ironic advertising is processed cognitively in terms of attention.

2.7 Schema-congruity theory:

Schema theory in cognitive psychology suggests that people tend to simplify reality by organizing and storing all available knowledge and experience about their social environment in memory based cognitive structures, called *schemata* (Friske & Taylor, 1991). Our long-term memory, also referred to as (cognitive schemata) is developed based on our perception of stimuli and how we react when exposed to stimuli over a period of time. This accumulation of stimuli or information can set our cognitive economy, and determine how we would react if we encounter a new social phenomenon (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Sujan and Bettman 1989). Likewise, consumers' knowledge about the market can be perceived and processed through their information system, examples of that are products, brands, or ad schemata. The schema congruity theory has been applied in marketing research to demonstrate how the accumulation of schematic knowledge can impact how consumers process and engage to marketing communications (Sujan and Bettman 1989; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Goodstein, 1993). When consumers are bombarded by brand advertisements, they use their long-term memory to process incoming information while integrating it with their existing information on advertisements in order to build inferences and facilitate purchase decisions (Sujan & Bettman 1989).

It's safe to say that consumer research and advertising always had an objective in creating effective communication between brands and consumers (Gerrath & Biraglia, 2021). Furthermore, the majority of persuasive models were developed upon the idea of creating messages that congruent are to consumer perceptions and experiences in order to be more relevant, more comprehensible, and more appealing (Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan 1991; Vaughn 1980; Ratchford 1987; Keller 1991; Petty and Wegener 1998).

Nonetheless, in a highly competitive market creating a brand message that matches the consumer's schemata may not always be the most effective strategy (Halkias & Kokkinaki, 2011). Cognitive psychology studies challenge the proposition of matching hypothesis and point toward a different perspective, according to which schema incongruent stimuli may lead to more favorable results once the incongruities are resolved (Mandler, 1982). Incongruent advertising defined as a mismatch between consumers' ad expectation (product, brand, endorser, music, word, photo, etc.) and the actual presented ad (Baird, 2011). Furthermore, Baird carried on to say "That's precisely what advertising people are going for; a disturbance in your thinking that causes you to pause, consider or reflect on the brand".

2.8.1 Schema Incongruity:

Schema incongruity is the condition in which a person's prior knowledge does not coincide with what they are currently recognizing or experiencing (Mandler, 1982). Schema, a knowledge structure stored in memory, is the term for this prior information (Bobrow and Norman 1975). Based on previously analyzed information about the stimuli, people have constructed and already had this knowledge structure in their minds. People's attitudes and opinions concerning the stimulus item are typically influenced by the knowledge structure (Mandler, 1982). Schema incongruity in the context of ironic advertising happens when the ad elements conflict with the viewer's schema. For instance, when viewers of the "Don't Vote" advertisement notice that the headline (i.e., an ad element) differs from their prior understanding of voting (i.e., we should vote), they do so because they have learnt that voting is a responsibility of citizens to strengthen the democratic system. Because the title and the schema are inconsistent, viewers may perceive the advertisement as being weird. However, after reading the text (i.e., body copy) and seeing the images, they understand that the underlying message is to vote rather than not vote (the literal meaning). The viewers have shared knowledge and information about voting with the senders, which is the basis for understanding the content of this ironic advertisement.

2.8.2 Schema Incongruity in advertising:

In terms of incongruity frameworks, Halkias & Kokkinaki (2011) introduced the first schema incongruity framework and their results supported the use of printed atypical advertisements because they produced more ad processing, better memory, and more favorable attitudes from consumers, which correlates to what was mentioned earlier by Baird (2011). With the increasing importance of digital marketing channels, a more recent study by Gerrath & Biragla (2021) was the first to address the impact of less congruence in a social media context. The study addressed products rather than advertisments, and demonstrated that consumers would engage more on social media when brands post about new products that are incongruent with their schema. Contrastingly, Jung (2017) looked at the relationship between perceived relevance and consumers' attention to or avoidance of tailored adverts. According to Jung's (2017) empirical argument, buyers are more likely to show significant interest in a targeted advertisement if they believe it to be somewhat relevant and straight forward. Nonetheless, Jung (2017) found that consumers are more inclined to disregard social media advertisements if they feel any privacy concerns. Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes toward social media marketing are strongly impacted negatively by both intrusiveness and privacy concerns, as demonstrated by Lin and Kim's (2016) compelling data.

A headline in ironic advertising, as previously mentioned, conflicts with the viewer's conventional knowledge. An ironic communication, according to Mcquarrie & Mick (1996) is a unique case of "incongruity" between the message and the shared attitudes or beliefs. They looked at how an ironic message is perceived and comprehended by describing the receiver's attempt to make sense of the contradiction. This dissonance is a crucial component in explaining how an ironic message affects the receiver's reaction. Few research have focused on the audience's cognitive process to comprehend ironic advertising, despite the fact that many studies have explained ironic advertising in the context of rhetorical tropes or devices (Andersen 2003; Deighton 1992; Stern 1990). The latest study in the field of ironic advertising by Kim & Kim (2018) targeted ironic ads vs non ironic ads for high tech products such as audible books, however we can’t conclude that it could deliver the same positive results for other sectors other advertising platforms such as social media, furthermore the lack of stimulus presented to the respondents presents an issue in validating wether or not the ironic ads were in fact effective.

2.8.3 Influence of incongruity on attention:

The impact of the incongruity on viewers' attention to the advertisement has been the subject of numerous research. Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) investigated the discrepancy between a product category schema and the characteristics of the new product. They showed that the incongruity triggered increased information processing, despite the fact that their study is not specifically about advertising (i.e., more cognitive processing). Goodstein (1993) also looked into the drives behind using a schema to interpret incongruent advertising messages. In his research, prior knowledge of the product category depicted in the advertisement led to the activation of a schema. After watching both congruent and incongruent advertising, he compared the cognitive reactions of the respondents. According to Goodstein's study, incongruent advertising elicits more high - level cognitive processing and more significant cognitive responses than congruent advertising. Furthermore, Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpandé (2003) showed how consumers' reactions are influenced by incongruent advertising when it is combined with an already-existing ad schema. They proved that incongruent messages in advertising lead to stronger brand recall by testing the impact of incongruity between the origin of the ad character and the target demographic. Combining the elaboration likelihood model and the schema incongruity theory, Lee and Schumann (2004) provided an explanation for this process (ELM). An integrated model of processing incongruity was suggested. According to their approach, message recipients who are motivated and have the cognitive capacity to process incongruent communications will process the message centrally. Uncomfortable mental states brought on by incongruity should be swiftly remedied because they produce uneven cognitive strain (Guido, 2001).

Various studies on cognitive processing have also revealed how this tension is relieved when there is schema incongruity. Because the stimulus is inconsistent with their frame of reference and causes the incongruent state, people experience tension, stress, and discomfort while they are in a schema incongruity state (Attardo, 1997). As a result, when faced with a schema incongruity, people usually try to ease the tension by actively seeking out data that will validate and support their schema. In the aforementioned "Don't Vote" advertisement scenario, viewers would hunt for related data to support their schema (i.e., they would look closely at the ad elements). In conclusion, tension caused by incongruent advertising tends to increase the amount of cognitive processing (i.e., thoughts) needed to relieve the tension. Therefore, ironic advertising increases attention to the advertisement and message involvement.

Brands are taking more drastic measures to stand out from the competition and generate brand engagement (i.e., the liking, commenting, or sharing of posts on social media) (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020). While Gerrath & Biraglia (2021) addressed how consumers react to Atypical products on social media, there has not been any study that addressed consumers; reaction to ironic advertising by small businesses before launching.

In a very competitive market such as food & beverage, upcoming businesses struggle in attracting attention. This study is the first to provide a pre launch marketing plan through signaling schema incongruity theory and opinion leadership, in order to create buzz, word of mouth, and generate followers before even opening the restaurant.

2.9 Opinion Formers:

According to Nunes et al. (2018), opinion formers are those who have the power to influence other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions. This concept is a crucial component of marketing communications to adopt new products and the dissemination of information related to those products (Chan & Misra, 1990; Wang, Ting, & Wu, 2013). According to Leal, Hor-Meyll, and de Paula Pessôa (2014), opinion leaders should possess at least one of the following characteristics: be recognized as an expert on a product or service; be an engaged member of an online community; participate frequently and significantly; or be regarded by other users as having good taste in regards to purchasing decisions. On the same note Goldenberg, Lehmann, Shidlovski, and Barak (2006), stated that opinion formers can either have extensive knowledge in a particular subject (experts) or strong interpersonal ties (social connectors).

Previous studies have identified a number of traits that are helpful in defining opinion formers. According to Nunes et al. (2018), these traits provide them the ability to influence members of the most influential group in social systems inside a social network. In terms of characteristics, they are more likely to be younger, have stronger educational backgrounds, make more money, exhibit higher levels of social mobility, and have better work status (Song et al., 2015). They exhibit inventive and exploratory behavior that can be recognized (Vigar-Ellis et al., 2015). Opinion leaders are able to demonstrate a deep level of familiarity and ongoing engagement with products. They tend to be technically proficient, actively participate in society, and consume a lot of mass media (Jansson et al., 2017). Given that consumers view opinion leaders as reliable sources of information, research suggests that their influence over consumers' preferences and behaviors is greater than that of standard advertising messages (Carr & Hayes, 2014). Consequently, the credibility of information imparted by an opinion leader is considered a crucial attribute that empowers them to propagate concepts or sway customer decisions (Carr & Hayes, 2014). In other words, because they share both positive and bad information, opinion followers view them as honest and trustworthy, and they regularly discuss concerns with them (Yang et al., 2020). Although genuine intellectual prowess may contribute to this trustworthiness, high levels of selfconfidence are typically the cause (Batinic et al., 2016). In summary, trustworthiness is regarded as an essential quality for opinion leaders that allows them to exert influence over others (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

2.9.1 Influencer Marketing:

Influencer marketing, at its core, is a form of social media promotion that relies on recommendations and mentions of products from influencers people who have a sizable social media following and are recognized as specialists in their field (Chen, 2020). When compared to the expense of making banner ads, television ads, outdoor ads, etc., which are always an investment layer on top of the media expenditure, influencer marketing is quite inexpensive (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Furthermore, research demonstrates that the amount of brand-sponsored influencer posts on Instagram has surged by 187.5% during 2017, according to Statista (2019). However, social media influencers (SMIs) still have a poor effectiveness in terms of post-consumer engagement (Feehan, 2018). Post-consumer engagement is critical for social media success therefore, it seems that there are still a lot of unanswered questions regarding what aspects of SMIs influence the brand attitudes of their followers among academics and practitioners (Nafees, et al., 2021). For example, the same person may feature in advertisements for several products or services and impact their advertisement effectiveness, hence celebrites associated with multiple brands in different sectors may negatively impact their credibility (Erdogan, 1999). In addition, some social media influencers are not experts on the products concerned, which decreases consumer trust as some cosnumers prefer expertise over populartiy (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019). These negative aspects linked to celebrity endorsers have led companies to increasingly use peer endorsers and field experts instead (Kamins, 1989).

2.9.1.1 Influencer Marketing in the Restaurant sector:

Due of its low cost, extensive reach, and high level of interaction, social media marketing is frequently favored by independent restaurant operators (Needles & Thompson, 2013). Influencer marketing, a recent trend in social media advertising, enables restaurants to pay celebrities in the food industry to post their dining experiences and promote restaurants to their followers. Because it offers a high return on investment, social media influencer marketing is growing in popularity in the hospitality sector, provided the right influencers are chosen (Wie et al., 2021). Influencer marketing is booming in the restaurant sector as a cost-effective and quick method of attracting customers however, few studies have explored social media influencer marketing for independent restaurants. (Lee et al., 2021). By sharing their positive interactions with their followers on social media sites, these influencers promote the restaurants (Freberg et al., 2011). Influencer marketing expands the restaurants' audience and raises the possibility that it will engage with the intended customers (Lee et al., 2021). Additionally, marketing initiatives using blogs, vlogs, and tweets have a beneficial impact on consumers' eating experiences and their propensity to buy suggested food items (Azzam & Waleed, 2020). As far as the literature shows only one study addressed the impact of social media influencers on the middle eastern restaurant business. Leung et al., (2022) study on the Saudi restaurant sector indicates that the trustworthiness of a male influencer and the social attraction of a female influencer lead to higher restaurant visit intentions. There are some notable limitations to this study, firstly this study only investigated followers' perceptions and behavioral intentions toward a single influencer on a single social media platform, Snapchat. In practice, independent restaurants commonly employ multiple influencers on various social media platforms to maximize their exposure (Mallipeddi et al., 2021). Secondly, the study generalizes the results on the entirety of the Arab population although it only included Saudi participants.

The marketing strategies of social media influencers for independent restaurants have not been extensively studied (Vrontis et al., 2021). Future research in food-related contexts in locations outside of the United States was encouraged by Vrontis et al (2021) systematic literature review of social media marketing, as consumers from different cultures may respond differently to influencer marketing. The middle east which differs from western and Asian civilizations in terms of culture, places a high priority on religion, conservatism, tradition, and family. Arab countries have received minimal study attention because it is difficult to acquire data there (Lages & Pfajfar, 2015). Therefore, research on social media influencer marketing in the middle eastern market setting is necessary to comprehend the special underlying mechanism that applies to the larger Arab and Islamic cultures.

2.10 Pre-Launch Marketing Communication Campaign for SMEs:

The practice of pre-launch marketing is relevant to short life cycle industries (e.g., new phones such as the iPhone, movies, or video games), these industries often experience high demand after launch, however the peak in demand is usually followed by a significant decline in sales (Burmester et al,. 2015). Moreover, in some cases those industries (e.g., Apple, Warner Bros) are known for launching new products, however they remain well established as a brand (Little, 2022). Contrastingly upcoming SMEs in saturated sectors need to build their brand name by raising brand awareness in order to gain visibility before launching products as they are still new and lack consumer trust (Vianna et al,. 2016). Brand awareness can be defined as the familiarity of consumers with the qualities or image of a particular brand (Huang & Sarigöllü , 2014). Furthermore, building this familiarity in a Pre-Launch stage can help SMEs gain peak demand when opening the business (Marvel et al,. 2020).

New businesses are no strangers to challenges, numerous start-ups already fail within their first few years in the market (Escheberger, 2020). One of the primary reasons for their struggles is lack of demand & marketing mishaps (Horton, 2022). The prior can be identified before launch if the latter is conducted correctly. Pre-Launch marketing campaigns can provide feedback for SMEs about the market that can help them make some changes before going the extra mile and opening (Marvel et al,. 2020). Consumer engagement, and electronic WOM on social media are key indicators of what a SME may expect when launching (Daughtery & Hoffman, 2013). Furthermore, WOM has been defined in a number of ways, ranging from conveyed consumer enthusiasm for a product or service (Heckman, 1999), to positive or negative evaluative communication, to information transmission (Richins & Root, 1988) and collective consumer 'buzz'.

One of the objectives behind this study is to provide a pre-launch marketing model, to ease the opening phase for SMEs by building brand awareness prior to opening, and gaining some information on the expected consumer turnout when launching based on e-WOM. According to Rathore & Ilavarasan (2020) businesses cannot use post-launch techniques in a pre-launch phase as they are inapplicable. Their work demonstrates how post launch marketing can portray the consumer opinion on social media after testing the product or service, however pre-launch is all about building buzz and excitement around what's coming. Another study by Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono (2019) in a post-launch phase investigates the differences in consumer pleasure, arousal and purchase intention when consumers encounter food advertising on Instagram using different endorsers and visual complexity levels. The results show that food posts with high visual complexity generated more favorable responses compared to low visual complexity, and people preferred celebrities sharing their opinions on the food rather than experts. The reason why their post-launch method is not applicable to pre-launch is that it assumes people are already familiar with the brand with no regards to brand awareness or in congruency to capture attention.

2.11 Novel Foods:

This research is all about creating neural responses that violate expectations, creating a sense of novelty and surprise. In cognitive psychology novelty is an antecedent of attention, emotion, memory, and behavior in reaction to a salient stimuli (Skavronskaya, Moyle, & Scott, 2020). Moving to the context of this research, significant advancements in food innovation have resulted from the notable surge in the quantity of novel foods that have hit the market (Bäckström et al,. 2004). However, the introduction of new goods seems to have brought about a state of ambivalence or uneasiness, where certain innovations are met with resistance and mistrust while others effortlessly become a part of everyday life (Grunet & Valli, 2001). In actuality, according to some writers, the failure rate for new products is extremely high—between 70 and 80 percent (Barrena & Sanchez, 2013). The aversion that certain people exhibit towards new or unfamiliar foods, a condition known as neophobia, has been studied recently due to the complexity of food consumption decisions (Moreau, Lehman, & Markman, 2001).

The definition of food neophobia is the aversion to trying new foods or the unwillingness or refusal to eat (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Socioeconomic status is one of the numerous factors that affects the degree of food neophobia (Flight, Leppard, & Cox, 2003). A person's response on the FNS may be influenced by their gender, age, education, and living situation (rural vs. urban), according to recent research. Additionally, research revealed that women had lower levels of food fear than males did, with older participants exhibiting higher levels of food phobia and more educated participants having lower levels (Tuorila et al., 2001).

According to Martins and Pliner (2005), the variables that most accurately predict a person's readiness to consume new and familiar foods that contain animals and those that don't are determined by the food's familiarity (novel vs. familiar) and provenance (animal vs. non-animal). A more ethnic focused study (Olabi, Najm, Baghdadi, & Morton, 2009) examined the effects of unfamiliar foods on college students in Lebanon as opposed to those in the United States. Results show that compared to their American counterparts, Lebanese college students had higher levels of food phobia (36.4 vs. 29.8). Furthermore, the proportion of participants in the low neophobia group was significantly larger in the United States as compared to Lebanon (29.4% vs. 7.9%). These results, demand more investigation as they contrast with studies that demonstrate consumers' preference of novelty over traditionalism due to incongruity and lack of familiarity (Halkias & Kokkinaki, 2011; Gerrath & Biragla, 2021). This thesis follows a different approach in assessing subjects' response to novel foods. Firstly, the study touches on middle eastern consumers as a whole, a sample that has not been studied previously, secondly the approach is implemented as part of a cohesive framework that leads to the subject's willingness to try novel foods from a new restaurant after gaining information through an advertisement campaign.

2.12 Intention to engage on social media:

According to Hollebeek et al. (2014), p. 154, "the consumer's level of energy, effort, and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction, namely the liking, sharing, and commenting on posts" is referred to as behavioral (or digital) engagement. Studies (e.g., Bazi et al., 2020; Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015) have looked into the factors that influence users' behavior when they interact with branded postings on social media. Content plays a crucial role in the dissemination of social media communications, particularly when it aligns with users' interests, as noted by Bazi et al. (2020) and Zhang, Moe, & Schweidel (2017). Sharing product information with others is more likely when the information is valuable and of high quality (Wang & Yu, 2017). Researchers find that tie strength on social media platforms encourages mild envy, which improves brand attitude and favors people seeking and passing judgment on products (Chu & Kim, 2011). Pino et al., (2019) research demonstrates how the language used in social media posts—longer, emotive tweets formatted like exclamations—influences users' behavior. According to an exploratory study by Bazi et al. (2020), customers are motivated to interact with premium companies on social media by visual content. Li and Xie (2020) discovered that on

Instagram and Twitter, professional photos and high-quality sponsored material encourage more connection with airlines and sport utility firms. Based on existing research, we contend that behavioral engagement with travel-related content on SNPs is influenced by source credibility, homophily, and content quality. As a result, users will respond to information on social media by liking, sharing, and commenting if it represents their needs, wants, or lifestyle. Customers are therefore more inclined to interact with a post to express agreement or support for others in their social network, or just to express their own opinion, if they believe the information to be of a good caliber and originates from a reliable source with comparable interests and preferences.

Peer communications on social networking sites have a favorable impact on impulsive purchases, according to Huang (2016). In the setting of real-time streaming commerce platforms, Kang et al. (2021) show that tie strength mediates the relationship between behavioral engagement and interactivity. In this study, a theoretical framework is developed to assist small businesses in their pre-launch state to influence purchase behavior. This approach stems from the research problems mentioned earlier e.g. (Lack of marketing plans, a poor comprehension of the industry they operate in, and competition against well established companies). Capturing consumer attention in an extremely competitive market requires a novel approach tailored for small businesses. If new businesses followed on the marketing footsteps of well-established companies, accordingly, consumers will not be motivated to purchase the product/experience featured in a social media post, and they will not share it, like it, or comment on it due to not capturing consumer attention. Hence this research argues, that an ideal marketing campaign for new businesses begins by developing ads that lure attention which is the first step in the pyramid. In addition to developing those ads, trusted opinion leaders can come a long way in increasing the brand reach.

2.13 Summary of Gaps in the Literature:

The below table is a summary of the most relevant studies to this research, discussing their remarks, limitations, and how they compare to this research.

Article & Journal	Schema Incongruity Theory	Signaling Theory	Opinion Leaders/ Influencers	Other Theory	Post/Pre company Launch	Advertising Platform	Product/ Service	(Remarks & limitations in relation to this thesis)
Signaling trust: Cues from Instagram posts (Yang et al., 2020)		Cues: Post Attractiveness, Post Popularity, and Argument Quality **(to build consumer trust in order to purchase)**		Psychological theories of 'Cue Utilization' and 'Trust Online'	Post Launch	Instagram	Branded Apparel	Because this study focuses on apparel shopping inspired by Instagram posts, applications to other product categories may be limited. Furthermore, fashion is a dominant sector on Instagram, how can this study be useful for upcoming branded apparel that have no history on the platform? In terms of using signaling theory to build consumer trust the theory is applicable, however post attractiveness is widely used in the social media literature and does not provide a competitive advantage since the majority of businesses are following on those footsteps. Furthermore, the cues mentioned are applicable in a post launch setting however, they would not be viable in pre-launch because they are targeting what's already there and not building excitement about what to come. The food & beverage sector is also considered hedonic; therefore, the third cue argument quality is not applicable unless the product is considered utilitarian. Lastly using consumer trust as a dependent variable to the aforementioned cues assumes that attention is already captured and the brand already has a large following, however that is not the case when it comes to upcoming businesses.
Can social media influencer (SMI) power influence consumer brand attitudes? The mediating role of perceived SMI credibility (Nafees et al., 2021)		Market signaling theory using social media Influencer power as an independent variable **(to influence brand attitude).**	Influencer Expertise, Influencer Trust Worthiness, Influencer Good Will. **naive theories of social influence**	- Consumer Socialization Theory - Naive theories of social influence	Post Launch	Instagram	NA	The use of social media influencers as a signaling cue for positive brand influence is widely used in the literature and according to this study, influencer expertise and trust worthiness positively mediate the relationship. However, using them as a signal to successfully influence consumers to any Instagram product is not applicable. As quoted from the article "this research was not restricted to a specific product or service category". For example, some brands in the beauty industry highly depend on the appearance and aesthetic of the influencer far more than their expertise.

Advertising and Word-of-Mouth Effects on Pre-Launch Consumer Interest and Initial Sales of Experience Products (Kim & Hassens, 2016)				<u>Dynamic Interactivity</u> Online search & Blog posting (**combined would generate more WOM than advertising in Pre-Launch).**	Pre-Launch	Blogs	Experience Products: Motion Pictures & Video Games	In terms of theoretical limitations, the authors did not employ any theory to support their research which leaves room for incorporating theories that may add value to the dynamic interactivity of pre-launch marketing. Furthermore, the authors were not specific about the approach experience products should use in their advertisements when sharing them in blogs etc. A pre-launch campaign should have an advertising style ex. humorous, creative, typical, atypical. The authors failed to mention that. Contextually, the authors also mentioned how pre-launch campaigns are limited to experience products which leaves a gap for other products. Furthermore, although the study was conducted in a recent time-period the use of blogs for advertising is considered outdated.
Social media-based visual humor use in tourism marketing: a semiotic perspective (Ge, 2019)	Using incongruity humor Using humor in image posts **(to attract consumer social media engagement beyond tourism)**			Theory of Semiotics	Post Launch	Sina Weibo (Chinese social media Platform)	Tourism	Contextually, the study's context is based on a social media platform that is only based in China. Secondly, this study was applied on tourism, therefore we cannot really tell how it will do in other sectors. Theoretically, using humor as a variable to influence engagement is applicable in some stages for well established brands, however using it for brands that are unknown for the public will seem unprofessional and might leave a negative first impression after viewing the advertisement because their service or product are still unknown. At an early-stage humor can capture attention, however associating the brand with humor may lead the consumers to view the brand as facetious. Even if the new business is a tourism business, it's important to focus on present the what they have to offer more than use humor.

(Stafford & Stafford, 2012) <u>Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising</u>	Testing the impact of typical vs atypical ads **(on creating a more positive attitude towards the product).**			Theory of Schema-triggered affect	Post Launch	Television & Radio	Stereo Typed product category (Auto Dealerships)	There is no doubt that using atypical advertisements will leave a more positive attitude on consumers as shown in this study, however their approach does not demonstrate how it will perform in a cluttered environment and lacks rigor. The study participants were shown only two advertisements (typical & atypical) therefore we don't know how they will react if an atypical advertisement was in between a plethora of ads. Will they have the same positive response in such an environment? In reality businesses do not have the privilege of competing against one ad and they often are presented with ads from different sectors. For schema incongruent ads to be effective they must be presented in a cluttered environment in order to test their effectiveness.
The effect of intrinsic and extrinsic quality cues of digital video games on sales: An empirical investigation (Choi et al., 2018)		Cues: Combined intrinsic (e.g., Company reputation) and extrinsic (e.g., price) quality ques **to observe Impact on product sales.**		Cue utilization theory	Post Launch	Websites	Video Games	Quality cues are rigorously studied in the literature when it comes to established brands. For this article, company reputation is a cue that is built over numerous years. If built successfully, it can be used to gain consumer trust in order to gain more sales however, reputation cannot be used if the company is in its launching phase. The second cue used in this article (price) can be useful when purchasing an experience product such as video games which is intended to be used for a long period of time.
Effects of ironic advertising on consumers' attention, involvement and attitude (Kim & Kim, 2018)	Identify the effects of ironic advertising on generating **(consumers' ad attention, ad involvement and ad/brand attitudes based on the caption of an ad)**			Need for cognition (NFC) individual differences in processing cognitive messages	Post Launch	Websites	Audible Books	Contextually, the study only targeted ironic ads vs non ironic ads for high tech products such as audible books, however we can't conclude that it could deliver the same positive results for other sectors other advertising platforms such as social media Although the need for cognition theory (NFC) is discussed in this study, the authors did not take into account the degree of incongruity in an ironic ad message. Some messages could be far more complex than what the niche market is capable of processing. Furthermore, as the main objective is to capture consumer attention, this study does not specify what type of attention processing is occurring when

Effects of ironic advertising on consumers' attention, involvement and attitude Continued								consumers view ironic ad compared to the non-ironic ad. The authors are using a salient stimulus in the presented advertisement (irony) to capture attention; however, they have not mentioned the attention type allowing the participants to cognitively process the advertisements. The lack of stimulus presented to the participants is also worth mentioning. Four non ironic advertisements to only one ironic ad is not enough to declare saliency.
Endorsement and visual complexity in food advertising on Instagram (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019)			**Celebrity endorsers** can allow consumers to experience greater pleasure and arousal compared to experts	**Visual complexity** levels of the advertisement can have an influence on consumer pleasure & arousal	Post Launch	Instagram	Food & Beverage	The study shows that celebrity endorsers generated higher levels of pleasure and arousal for consumers when compared to food experts. This study contradicts the findings of (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019) and demonstrates reasons to believe otherwise. Participants for this thesis shared their lack of trust in celebrities as they are willing to promote many different products or services that are completely unrelated to their field. Participants from the focus groups showed that they would be more attentive to food advertisements that are sponsored by food experts such as chefs because they're more trustworthy.
Attractive females versus trustworthy males: Explore gender effects in social media influencer marketing in Saudi restaurants (Leung et al., 2022)				**The uncertainty reduction theory** "using self-disclosure to reduce uncertainty" **The self-categorization on theory**	Post Launch	Snapchat	Independent Restaurants in Saudi	Firstly, the study only addresses the use of influencers in order to create visitor intention and does not address the restaurant brand by any means. Few studies, have explored the use of influencers in the context of independent restaurants, however the same emphasis can be on the brand as well. The restaurant business is prominent in the middle east and the use of influencers alone does not guarantee consumer visits. Secondly, in terms of the use of self-categorization theory, the study fails to specify how the Saudi consumers categorize themselves in order to find the most suitable influencers. Surely, there will be differences in categorization between consumers but there will also be things in common that should be investigated.

Social media interactions, purchase intention, and behavioural engagement: The mediating role of source and content factors (Onofrei, Filieri, & Kennedy, 2022)					Service dominant logic (SDL) information adoption model (IAM)	Post Launch	Facebook & Instagram	This study put out and tested empirically a framework for evaluating how user interactions on social media platforms affect users' intentions and behaviors more especially, their desire to make a purchase and engage in behavioral engagement. They proposed that source (homophiles, credibility) and content elements (quality) that serve as significant intermediates in the link between the interactions of social media with purchase intention and behavioral engagement (likes, shares, and comments made by customers on postings).
<u>This Study:</u> **Visibility through clutter: How could brands cut through advertising clutter on Instagram?**	Native Ironic Advertising is derived from Schema Incongruity theory **(to capture consumer attention from a bottom-up perspective)**	Signaling Cues: Using two extrinsic cues (Atypical advertising, & Food Bloggers) **for capturing consumer attention in a hedonic sector**	Trust Worthy & experienced Food Bloggers that would promote the brand	AIDA	Pre-Launch	Instagram	Food & Beverage Sector	**<u>Theoretical Contribution:</u>** This study contributes to the theory of bottom-up attention processing which is where schema incongruence is derived from. Bottom-up attention allows the consumers to cognitively process the incongruent advertisements and unlike top-down attention it is not arbitrarily decided. Bottom-up processing is the foundation of all salient advertisements and this study will be the first to contribute to the theory in an advertising setting. There is a scarcity in the literature on extrinsic signaling cues for hedonic products or services in a pre-launch setting. This study will be the first to contribute to signaling theory by investigating cues that are applicable in a pre-launch hedonic setting. Studies have promoted the use of ironic ads to tackle the vexation caused by advertising clutter on social media & outdoor advertising, however none have tested the success of an ironic ad in a cluttered environment in order to test its effectiveness. This study will be the first to test the effectiveness of ironic advertisements in an environment with excessive ads.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Gaps

Chapter 3. Research Methodology:

Surveys, focus groups, case studies, interviews, experiments, and interviews are some of the common research strategies that are commonly used in business management and social science studies. These strategies are typically studied independently but can show convergence in a single study (Yin, 1994). The following chapter firstly explores the mixed-method research design approach used to address the research aims and objectives, as well as the research philosophy and approaches employed.

3.1 Research Paradigm:

The phrase "paradigm" in academic research refers to the "worldview" of the researcher (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The viewpoint, way of thinking, school of thought, or collection of accepted ideas that guides the interpretation or meaning of the study findings. Alternatively, a study paradigm intrinsically reflects the researcher's worldview and the world they aspire to live in, as Lather, (1986) says. To be more precise, a paradigm is made up of the abstract ideas and precepts that influence a researcher's perspective on the world as well as their interpretation and the way they behave. Lincoln et al., (1985) defined a paradigm as having three components: methodology, ontology, and epistemology. The fundamental presumptions and beliefs are comprised of these three parts; thus it is crucial to have a solid understanding of them.

3.1.1 Ontology:

The topic of what makes anything real is addressed by ontology. It encapsulates the essence of our research and alludes to the idea of existence, explaining how reality is viewed and comprehended. Is reality seen from an objective perspective, that is, is there an actual "out there" that exists independently, or is it created by our experiences? (Lee & Lings, 2008). The objectivist and constructivist viewpoints are the two schools of thinking under this paradigm. It is the contention of the objectivism attitude that social phenomena and their meanings exist apart from social actors. According to Bryman (2004), it suggests that social processes present themselves to us as impersonal facts that are outside of our control. Consequently, adopting a realist perspective that emphasizes reality's objectivity and the fact that it exists independently of our experiences (Borst, Akkermans, & Top, 1997).

3.1.2 Epistemology:

Under the ontological paradigm, epistemology asks, "What constitutes valid knowledge?" This idea explains how reality is generated, how much of it we can know (Lee & Lings, 2008), and how we can get this information (Bernard H. , 2000). It raises the question of how we can know our chosen domain with confidence. The two primary schools of thought in the social sciences regarding epistemology are positivism and interpretivism. Research, regardless of its positivist or interpretivist orientation, is typically examined in light of three primary factors: (1) the nature of the relationship between the theory and research findings, i.e., whether the theory directs the study or is the research's consequence; (2) the research's epistemological orientation, which relates to what constitutes appropriate knowledge in the field of social science (natural science, positivism, interpretivism, etc.); and (3) the research's ontological considerations, which concern whether social actors are seen as part of the process or as existing outside of it (Bryman, 2004).

3.1.3 Methodology:

The word "methodology" refers to a broad range of techniques, approaches, and procedures used in a well-planned investigation aimed at producing knowledge (Keeves & Dang, 2003). The vast methodology field includes data collection, participants, tools used, and data analysis. Ultimately, the approach explains the reasoning and progression of the methodical procedures carried out in carrying out a research endeavor in order to obtain understanding of a research problem.

A mixed methods methodology is traditionally defined as an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple approaches, views, and standpoints from a qualitative and quantitative research perspective (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Mixed methods approach combines the findings of qualitative and quantitative research and as a result it can "enhance our beliefs that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact" (Bouchard, 1976, p. 268). More importantly, mixed methods are used to negotiate the findings of both approaches (qualitative & quantitative) and come to a conclusion on what they mean in conjunction (Bryman, 2007).

Greene et al. (1989) have explored five key justifications for the integration of qualitative and quantitative research, in the context of evaluation research:

- ***Triangulation:*** Converging the results of different methods for means of corroboration
- ***Complementarity:*** Clarifying the results of one method using findings from another
- ***Development:*** Using the results of one method to develop or inform another method e.g. sampling, implementation and measurement decisions
- ***Initiation:*** Seeking paradoxes and contradictions using a new perspective. This may also involve the recasting of questions/findings with those of another method
- ***Enquiry:*** Extending the breadth and range of enquiry by using different methods for various inquiry components

Despite the characteristics of mixed-methods research that serve to counteract the biases of other methods (Creswell, 2009), there are still a number of obstacles to successful integration of qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman, 2007). Researchers that use mixed methods frequently discover that they are writing for several audiences, emphasizing or using a particular set of data more or less completely. This procedure is determined by the nature and appeal of a given topic to stakeholders as well as initial perceptions of an audience's expectations. Due to methodological preferences, some researchers have a propensity to emphasize the results of data sets that they are more knowledgeable and comfortable with.

Similar to this, the type of data obtained may also make integration difficult; for example, one set of data may have more interesting results that should be emphasized over others. Another obstacle to the integration of qualitative and quantitative data is found to be related to how research projects are constructed. For example, if a project is set up to make use of surveys easy, this will also affect and guide how qualitative data is collected and analyzed (Bryman, 2007).

This research project, employs a mixed methods triangulation research design (Creswell & Clark, 2011) in its mixed-methods procedure by conducting an initial qualitative phase of data collection and analysis, followed by a phase of experimental design, quantitative data collection and analysis, with a final phase of integration or linking of data from the three separate strands of data (Creswell, 2009). Mixed methods was found most suitable for this research due to the usage of a range of techniques, approaches, and procedures aimed at validating a pre-launch marketing framework.

3.2 Research Aim and Objectives:

The goal of this three-phase, exploratory sequential mixed-method study is to first explore the pre-launch marketing phenomenon from the ground up by investigating how, when, and why customers engage with restaurant brands through semi-structured focus groups that will be further analyzed through thematic analysis. The second step is to experimentally measure ironic ads as a construct through an approach similar to the participants' everyday Instagram experience through a within subject experimental design. The third step is to conduct a quantitative survey design in order to develop a theoretical framework that attempts to conceptualize the pre-launch marketing phenomena and its various characteristics that will be further analyzed through SPSS and AMOS. Lastly, this research study aims to assess the pre-launch marketing aspects that business owners and marketers should take advantage of to enable a successful restaurant debut.

The initial motivation for gathering exploratory qualitative data was influenced by the lack of studies that recognizes pre-launch marketing or how it may be conceptualized as such (Kim & Hassens, 2016; Yang et al., 2020); as well as the dearth of empirical data found in cluttered social media marketing environments (Leung et al., 2022; Kim & Kim, 2018; Nafees et al., 2021). In response, chapter 2 of this thesis critically discussed the ambiguity of earlier conceptualizations of the food and beverage sector in the Middle East, how attention is captured through bottom-up processing, and with the already limited extant literature focusing primarily on providing a salient stimulus for consumers (Kim & Kim, 2018; Ge, 2019). This study argues that in order for a new restaurant to build an effective pre-launch marketing campaign that captures consumers' attention, it must have salient features. Therefore, the selected independent variable that contributes to bottom-up attention is ironic advertising through the use of schema incongruity theory.

3.3 Research Philosophy:

The philosophical standpoint of any research study stems from its research questions which it seeks to address. In the discipline of marketing, the research design that is employed to investigate the research questions is influenced by: the nature of the research, the organization it is investigating, the stakeholders involved, the competition arena and the implications and anticipated outcomes of the research. While positivist and interpretivist approaches are opposing to one another, pragmatism is an approach that contends that there are numerous approaches to understanding reality and conducting research; combining these approaches can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Interpretivists strive to discover, investigate, and elucidate the link between factors in their social environments rather than formulating assumptions or hypotheses prior to research, which aids in responding to "why" and "how" inquiries through qualitative research (Vorakulpipat & Rezgui, 2008). According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), positivism illustrates how reality can be independently observed, measured, and tested and how it exists apart from the human mind. In the field of management, theories and assumptions are based on observed phenomena. Furthermore, a researcher following the positivism approach collects and organizes data using quantitative techniques and tools in order to eventually confirm or refute these theories using a deductive approach (Vorakulpipat & Rezgui, 2008).

To uncover answers to the research questions, this study employs a pragmatic research philosophy as it allows researchers to inquire into different aspects of social research using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, leading to a consensus on conceptualizing good quality social research that supports a mixed methods research paradigm (Shah, Shah, & Kashkelly, 2018). Pragmatism, enables researchers to appreciate the complexity and unpredictability of social life based on "what will work best" in their research designs. This approach allows pragmatic researchers to conduct research in novel and dynamic ways, ultimately leading to the resolution of research difficulties (Chandra & Shang, 2019). Initially, five semi-structured focus group consumer-based interviews were conducted in order to gather preliminary information about how consumers interacted with restaurants in a pre-launch phase during Phase 1. In terms of developing measurement scales for Phase 2 and Phase 3, the practices from Haws et al., (2022) were applied based on the theoretical framework.

3.4 Research Approach:

In terms of the research approach, induction and deduction are believed to be an investigation into the origins of methodological or scientific assumptions and how we assess whether or not they are true (Hansen, 1958). There has been debate on whether or not such logics are conceivable, particularly if they produce or create an original or distinctive mode of reasoning that differs from conventional inductive and deductive logic (Audi, 1995). Inductive research refers to methods where concepts, themes, or models are derived from extensive readings of the raw data collected by an analyst or researcher. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “In inductive research the researcher begins with a field of study and enables the theory to emerge from the facts”.

Deduction is conducted by collecting data first to support an established argument. The task is to identify theories that are well-established or broadly defined and then apply them to a particular phenomenon (Chandra & Shang, 2019). The gathered data will then either confirm or refute the hypotheses you have attempted to apply; both of these conclusions will be useful. The finest and most widely used strategy is deductive, according to practice (Harman & Gilbert, 1965). This method involves outlining or highlighting an argument based on your prior understanding of the chosen subject or issue, then conducting additional research to fill in any gaps. This is referred to as active reading. Deductive approach starts or works from more building general knowledge and making it more specific.

However, there's yet a third methodological option. Deductive and inductive approaches have some shortcomings that abductive reasoning, often known as the "abductive approach," aims to solve. An imperfect (or "messy") observation from experience and reality is used in abductive reasoning, which adopts a pragmatic viewpoint. This process can produce a new theory or at least the best guess at the truth (Mirza & Martin, 2014). However, it should be noted that abductive reasoning is comparable to deductive and inductive methods when it comes to applying logic to draw conclusions and develop hypotheses. An explanation of the "surprising facts" or "puzzles" is the first step in the research process when using the abductive approach (Kovács & Spens, 2005). According to Kovács and Spens (2005), the abductive approach involves beginning the research process with "surprising facts" or "puzzles" and devoting the next steps to explaining them. It is possible for a researcher to come upon an empirical phenomenon that the variety of theories now in use cannot account for. In order to explain the "surprising facts" or "puzzles" that were initially recognized at the beginning of the research process, the researcher then tries to select the "best" response from a wide range of options. It is possible to mix numerical and cognitive reasoning also known as qualitative and quantitative methods to find answers for the phenomenon (Mitchell, 2018).

Accordingly, the abductive approach was more suited due to having identified the research gap, namely pre-launch marketing for small businesses at an early stage in researching social media marketing alongside irony which acts as the “surprising fact” according to Kovács and Spens (2005). Alongside advertising clutter which acts as the puzzle this research intends to solve. In comparison, an inductive approach would not be suitable for this study since the research objective and problem were identified and researched at an early stage. A deductive approach would also not be suited to this study as there was no framework nor hypothesis in sight at the beginning of this research, there was only an idea that transformed into a pre-launch marketing framework.

In this thesis, the objective initially is to identify how upcoming restaurants can capture attention in a cluttered environment on Instagram. The problem was identified and validated by the literature (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019), (Leung , Sun, & Asswailem, 2022). Upon that, intensive research was conducted in order to build an understanding on the different types of social media strategies that are most suitable for new businesses. Accordingly, the literature showed that consumers are currently bombarded with advertisements and tend to view only a few of them. Therefore, to break through the clutter, marketers need to design ads that can stop users and hold their attention long enough to process the ads cognitively before scrolling up or down to see other photos (Lee & Kim, 2020). Attention being the keyword from Lee & Kim (2020), research was conducted based on the types of attention processing (e.g., Top-Down, Bottom-Up processing). The latter is activated when a participant had no intention of paying attention due to salient stimuli exposure (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). In order to identify what is considered salient for the middle eastern consumer and a validate a pre-launch marketing communication model, semi structured focus group interviews (chapter 4) were conducted along with experiment design (chapter 5) and an analytical survey (chapter 6). Phase 1 of this methodology plays a vital role in identifying the byproduct of capturing cosnumer attention and developing a successful pre-launch marketing campaign from relevant antecedents, facilitators and experiences based on consumer experiences from the focus group interviews.

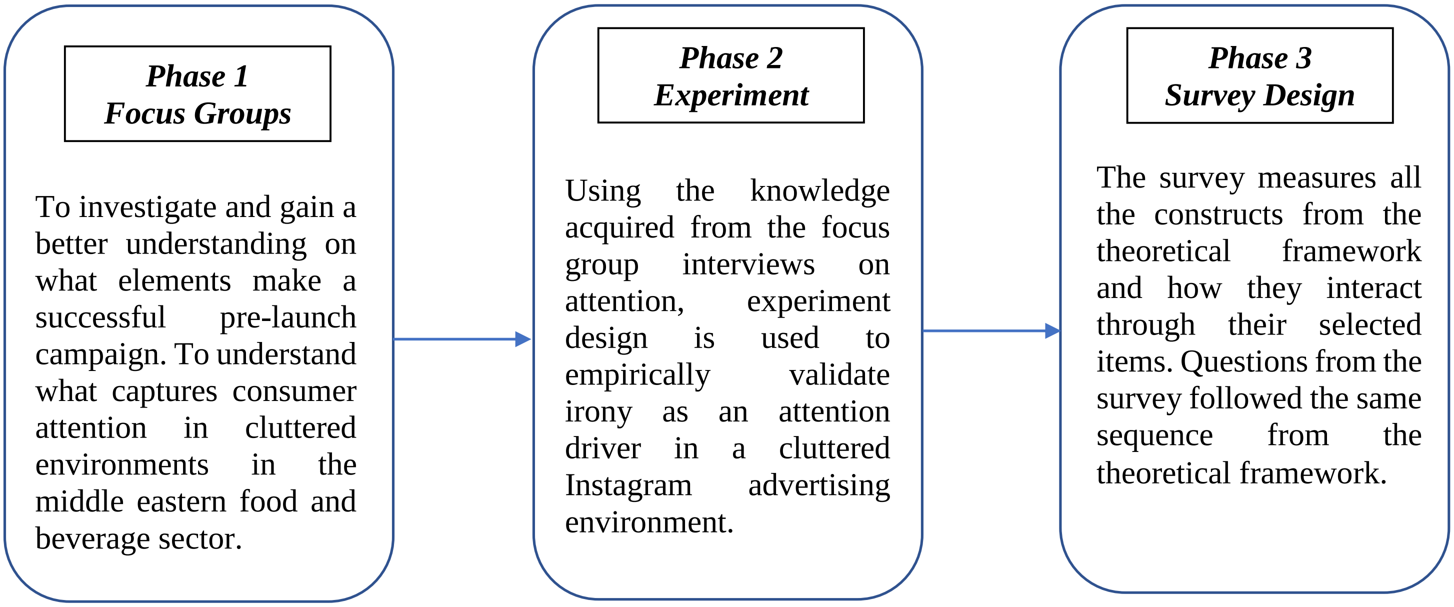


Figure 4: Research Stages

3.5 Summary:

The research philisophy chosen for this study is pragmatic because it enables researchers to investigate various facets of social research through both quantitative and qualitative methods, resulting in a consensus on how to conceptualize high-quality social research that supports a mixed methods research paradigm (Shah, Shah, & Kashkelly, 2018). This approach enables researchers to carry out their work in fresh and innovative methods, which eventually results in the resolution of research challenges (Shang & Chandra, 2019). The research approach for this three stage mixed methodology is abductive which is a mixture of inductive and deductive (Spens & Kovacs, 2006). The above allows for triangulation to occur, increasing the reliability, rigour and validity of the research findings. The following chapter introduces the qualitative study which is first phase of this three step methodology. The reasoning behind beginning with the qualitative study is the need to investigate and gain insight on how the middle eastern consumer portays the optimal pre-launch marketing campaign. Due to the abductive nature of this research, that is done through a set of open ended questions in a semi-structured focus group setting.

Chapter 4. Qualitative Study (Phase 1):

The chapter commences with Phase 1's research method and setting, followed by an overview of the participants' demographics; the sampling strategy employed and how the data was analyzed. The chapter then concludes with the key qualitative findings that have emerged from the Phase 1 research study along with the hypothesis development.

4.1 Data Collection:

The first phase of this research uses focus groups which is an approach that allows the researcher to collect data through recording group interviews and observations (Morgan, 1998). When the approach first came out, it was not embraced by the academic community, however as the results demonstrated its effectiveness in market research, academics began to further explore the approach in the 1980s (Krueger & Casey, 2000). As human beings it is of our nature to explore important topics and have discussions in the form of groups. This practice expanded as a data collection tool in the academic setting and has "exploded" distinctly in the marketing field because it allowed researchers to understand consumers on a deeper level compared to numerical results (Colucci, 2007). Focus group interviews were chosen for this study because of their capacity to include a sizable number of participants in a single group (Wall, 2001), as a quick and effective way to gather significant amounts of information (Krueger, 1994), and as a way to learn specific opinions or attitudes on a group level (Hines & Taylor, 2000). More importantly, it is one of the best tools when combined with other data collection techniques as a subset of mixed methods analysis which is utilized in the second phase of this study (McClelland, 2013).

4.1.1 Purposive Sampling:

Data gathering in research is crucial for providing a deeper understanding of the theoretical framework (Bernard, 2002). The method utilized for selecting the data sample is key for obtaining accurate results therefore, prudence in participant selection is imperative (Tongco, 2007). The technique used for the data sample selection is the purposive sampling technique due to its deliberate choice of a participant based on qualities that the participant possesses (Etikan, Musa, & Sunu, 2016). This technique is primarily used in qualitative studies and does not require a set number of participants or an underlying theory. In simple terms, the researcher will find people who can provide the most value to the study based on their knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002). Moreover, the participant's availability and willingness to participate in this study is equally important to their knowledge and experience from the researcher perspective (Spradley, 1979). The participant should be well informed of the study and has the ability to openly communicate their experiences and knowledge in an articulate manner. Contrastingly random sampling, must include a set number of participants with different backgrounds and cultures which is different than purposive sampling where the whole study is built around people who are homogeneous in their characteristics and ability to assist the relevant research (Etikan, Musa, & Sunu, 2016). For the first phase of this research purposive sampling is conducted based on the below criteria and participants were found through the help of social media and connections.

4.1.1.1 Interview inclusion criteria:

The participants were selected under 5 criteria in order to provide the most value and benefit for the research:

CRITERIA	REASON FOR CRITERIA
AT LEAST 2-YEARS EXPERIENCE USING INSTAGRAM	A 2-year period is enough for a person to grasp all the Instagram tools and develop a solid following of brands.
YOU HAVE A LIKING/PASSION FOR FOOD ON INSTAGRAM	In order to support the Instagram algorithm and have regular food advertisements as part of their feed.
PARTICIPANT MUST BE AN ARAB	The study is about the Arab consumer in particular, hence the participant must be an Arab.
MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE OR ABOVE	In most Arab countries the legal age is 21years or above hence in order to remain aligned with the law the participant selection was set out as 21.

Table 2: Interview Inclusion Criteria

4.2 Focus groups' objective:

The focus groups' objective is to investigate, what attracts consumers' attention in a cluttered setting to a pre-launch Instagram marketing campaign in the food and beverage sector. The need for conducting interviews stems from the lack research in the field of pre-launch marketing. The research gaps demonstrated in (Table 1) justify the need for more investigation in the matter, furthermore as this research follows an abductive approach, focus group interviews will provide much needed knowledge to the existing gaps that will enable the researcher to build upon the idea of pre-launch marketing in the middle eastern food & beverage sector. Purposive sampling was selected for the reason that participants should be well informed of the study and have the ability to openly communicate their experiences and knowledge in an articulate manner. The subjects voluntarily participated via Instagram story and through personal connections that fit the participant criteria which is mentioned further in the report.

4.2.1 Focus groups' characteristics:

Data was collected in this study through five semi-structured focus groups. Semi-structured groups were selected because they provide greater depth of information and allow more flexibility for the participants which is required when investigating a topic with limited knowledge (Blee & Taylor, 2002). Although there isn't a set number of focus groups that is always appropriate Krueger (1994), one of the most renounced authors in the field of qualitative research argues that focus group research should consist of at least three groups and the interview guide's objective should consist of facilitating group discussion, encouraging interest in the research topic, and guaranteeing that all necessary data is gathered (Dilorio et al., 1994).

The group size for this study consisted of six participants. The literature has a varied opinion as there is no hard and fast rule when it comes to sample sizes. Different studies have reported variations ranging from four participants (Krueger, 1994; Seggern & Young, 2003), five participants (Morgan, 1988; Ruyter, 1996), or from six to eight participants (Leito and Vergueiro, 2000; Evmorfopoulou, 2007). Furthermore, according to Ruyter (1996), "middle-sized" groups of eight to ten produce the best outcomes in terms of the caliber of ideas and participant satisfaction. However, the researcher has embraced the recognition in Prince & Davies' (2001) research that "small-sized" groups of 4 to 6 may be productive since they encourage members to participate in the discussion, resulting in the generation of a significant number of unique ideas on the topic at hand within a set amount of time.

Before initiating the data collection, focus group questions and instruments were piloted with a group of five senior bachelor's students. A pre-testing or "trying out" of a certain research instrument is considered a pilot study (Baker, 1994). Conducting a pilot study has the benefit of providing early warning regarding potential failure areas for the main research project, potential protocol violations, and the suitability of suggested methodologies and instruments (Van Teijlingen & Vanora, 2002). For this research, the pilot study resulted in reducing the questions from thirteen to ten questions since some of them had little to now value in correlation with the focus group objectives. Some questions were also subject to minor alterations in order for the them to be more open ended and aligned with the objectives.

For the main study, the researcher invited the participants to a meeting room with a recording device and were offered refreshments. The procedure of gaining consent was fairly straight forward. The Brunel research ethics online department (BREO) were sent the consent form, participation sheet, and questions for focus groups interviews well in advance. After receiving approval from the BREO to conduct the study, the primary researcher did all interviews by himself in English, and he also moderated the focus groups in English. Semi-structured interviews were employed to direct the conversation. The research aim and objectives formed the questions that were asked in the interviews.

4.2.2 Group Demographics:

Group #	Gender	Nationalities	Age
Focus group 1 Total Participants: 6	All of the participants were male.	Three were Syrian, two were Palestinian, and one was Egyptian	(25-30)
Focus group 2 Total Participants: 6	All of the participants were female.	Five participants were Kuwaiti, and one was Jordanian.	(21-24)

Focus group 3 Total Participants: 6	All of the participants were male.	Five participants were Kuwaiti, and one was Bahraini.	(22-26)
Focus group 4 Total Participants: 6	Two participants were female while the rest were male	Two participants were Palestinians, two were Egyptian, and two were from Saudi.	(27-32)
Focus group 5 Total Participants: 6	Three participants were female while the rest were male	Two participants were Saudi, and the rest were Kuwaiti and Lebanese.	(23-30)

Table 3: Focus Group Demographics

Recent studies on the age distribution of Instagram users reveal that the age range with the largest number of Instagram users is between 18 and 24 years old (Oberlo, 2024), with over one-third (31.7%) of all Instagrammers falling into this category. 30.6% of Instagram users are in the 25–34 age group, which comes next. That is to say, over three-quarters of all Instagram users are between the ages of 18 and 34. Thirteen percent of Instagram users are between the ages of thirty and forty-four, making them the third largest age group. The next age group is 45–54, with 8.7%, while the next oldest age group is 55–64, with just 4.6%. The percentage of Instagram users 65 and older is just 2.9%. As demonstrated in the group demographics (Table 3) the age range for focus group participation was intentionally selected between (21-32) since this range represents the vast majority of Instagram users worldwide (Oberlo, 2024).

4.3 Thematic Analysis:

In thematic analysis, the body of data, such as interview transcripts or news stories, are used to identify ideas that recur, which you explain by an existing theory or theories. It organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Clarke & Bruan, 2017). According to this research, thematic analysis was used instead of other approaches such as (grounded theory, narrative analysis) due to its abductive nature. As aforementioned, the main theories that suit the research objectives were identified prior to the data collection phase. Contrastingly, grounded theory methodology that, in the words of its founders, is used to "find a theory from data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1). This suggests that in grounded theory the researcher constructs a new "theory" based on empirical evidence gathered in the field rather than focusing on testing hypotheses taken from pre-existing theoretical frameworks. As a result, these data are purposefully given precedence over current theoretical ideas. In order to suit the nature of this study, the data collected from the focus group interviews was transcribed and arranged into themes and patterns that were compared to the existing theoretical framework in order to test its validity.

4.4 Data Analysis:

Research Aim: To explore the Pre-Launch marketing communication model.

Research Objectives: Based on the research aim the below objectives were established.

1. What is the role of bottom-up attention (schema incongruity theory and signaling theory) within the model?
2. What are the factors leading to a successful Pre-Launch marketing campaign and how do these factors interact?
3. To empirically validate the Pre-Launch marketing communication model.

NVivo 12 was used to analyze each qualitative data set separately. Based on the deductive coding, thematic analysis was then conducted to examine the open-ended replies from the interview participants. Additionally, rather than focusing primarily on individuals within the group, the developing themes were examined with a group as a whole (Krueger, 1994). It was accepted that the emerging data wasn't just a representation of individual viewpoints, but rather that it was largely a cooperative effort of these groups (Smithson, 2000). Particular focus was placed on how and whether the groups create common ground as well as how individual individuals add to this ground. As a result, analysis emphasized the discussion's topics and the dynamics of group interactions whilst coding. To create theory-centric conceptions, the first-order concepts were compared to recent literature (i.e., second-order themes). In order to find parallels and contrasts with earlier studies on the subject and so help advance the theory on pre-launch marketing, this comparison also served to ensure transferability. It is significant to emphasize that our goal was to examine how our findings built on prior findings rather than to reproduce them. After that, based on second-order themes, aggregate dimensions were created, which were then combined with first-order concepts, second-order themes, and secondary data to create a compendium.

Section	**List of questions**
Intro questions	• From your experience, what distinguishes the Arab consumer in terms of their food choices compared to other ethnicities? • Have you noticed any changes about the food & beverage sector in our present time compared to 15 years ago?
Transition questions	• How does Instagram assist you in getting to know a restaurant? • What restaurants do you follow on Instagram and why do you follow them? • Are you aware of any food brands on Instagram (past or present) that haven't opened yet, however you highly anticipated them? If yes, can you explain why you were excited about them?
Core questions	• In order for a restaurant's pre-launch campaign to have a huge impact on the general public what do you believe it should have (on social media, outside social media) in order to capture attention? • Do you believe social media platforms such as WhatsApp can be effectively used to build brand awareness? If yes, explain how you would do it? • In your opinion what are some of the things about a restaurant's Instagram page that may influence you to follow them? To answer this question could you please open your phones and demonstrate detailed examples what food content appeals to you and what are some of the things you dislike.
Closing comments	• On a scale of 1 to 5 how likely are you to purchase food from an account that you have already followed? Are there any factors that may influence your purchase intention after following the account?

Table 4: Interview Questions

The above questions were made to assist the researcher gain a deep understanding about pre-launch marketing in the middle east whilst focusing on attention drivers that capture consumer attention in the food and beverage sector on Instagram. The scarcity in the literature was the reasoning behind following this approach as the researcher needed more information about the targeted market before proceeding with hypothesis development and the theoretical framework.

Initial themes within the findings were acquired utilizing thematic analysis after the audio recordings of the respondents were first transcribed (Spiggle, 1994). A theme could be described as a code or a code that "...transcends any one code and is made up out of groups of codes" in the context of a qualitative investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 599).

Additionally, a theme is essentially a way for the researcher to organize the data in a way that is pertinent to the study topic, giving the researcher a better theoretical grasp of the data collected and contributing to the theory in the literature already in existence (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Second, in order to code for purposes in NVivo, core themes (or more abstract themes that have emerged) like "Excitement in Pre-Launch," "Influencer Status," and sub-themes like "Diversity in Ethnicities," "Changes in Consumers," were highlighted. Initially, relatively loose boundaries were established in order to prevent over-categorizing and data fragmentation. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), when looking for themes in a qualitative data set, the researcher should pay attention to the following: repetition of topics covered, indigenous typologies or categories used by locals in an unfamiliar way, metaphors and analogies, examples of transitions between topics, similarities and differences in cases, as well as linguistic connectors like "since" and "because," to identify potential causal relationships (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

In order to reflect on which terms have an umbrella effect on others using the data and guided by existing literature, some nodes were given "parent" status while others were given "child" status, for example, "Advertising in Pre-Launch" (parent node), which was encapsulated by child nodes like "Enhance Market Understanding, Brand Awareness, Building consumer brand connection."

Since this was a very thorough and long list of nodes the researcher has come across whilst interviewing the participants, axial coding was then utilized to reassemble the data in new ways (Collis & Hussey, 2013) achieved by reflecting on the initial set of nodes and sequentially connecting the nodes to contexts, consequences, interaction patterns and causal relationships e.g. Ironic Native Advertisements were found to moderate the attention of Instagram users, which in turn contributed towards consumers' intention to explore the brand.

4.4.1 Axial Coding

Axial coding is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by using a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. Firstly, open coding separates the data into categories to reassemble the data, secondly, axial coding connects the categories with the sub-categories. This coding process is concerned with building categories related to a (phenomenon), in this case that phenomenon is capturing attention in a pre-launch marketing campaign through categories such as incongruent ads and opinion leaders. By using axial coding, Strauss and Corbin claimed they had deviated too much from the fundamentals of grounded theory to still call it grounded theory. This coincides with the qualitative phase of this study, as the primary categories were already established before connecting the sub categories. As mentioned prior, a deductive approach was followed in building the primary categories before conducting the focus group interviews.

4.4.2 Selective Coding:

The third level of coding is selective coding. It allows the researcher to choose and incorporate ordered data categories from axial coding into coherent phrases that are rich in meaning. "Selective coding continues the axial coding process at a higher level of abstraction through actions that lead to an elaboration or formulation of the story of the case" (Flick, 2009, p. 310). The process of selective coding enables further data refinement, choosing the primary thematic category, and then methodically matching the primary theme to other categories that have been selectively coded which is crucial to enabling the story or case to emerge from the data categories. "The conceptualization of the yield from the selective coding as a 'case' or 'story' is significant as it provides researchers with flexible and multi-type vehicles for codifying and presenting study results" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 158). For example, selective coding assisted this study in linking the primary categories from the axial coding to the objective of this study. This enabled the researcher to extract the focus group findings and verify the conceptual framework (Figure 5).

4.5 Findings:

In this section, the first & second order are constructs are found through the focus groups' data, and the literature is used to build the aggregate dimensions.

Firstly, the focus group discussions all came to an agreement that Instagram is the number one platform for rating a restaurant before dining in or ordering. If a restaurant or food brand has a poor Instagram presence, customers will occasionally avoid them (Sheth, 2017). Therefore, food businesses using Instagram need to effectively communicate their products.

Usually before going to any restaurant, I would check their feed on Instagram to check the menu before going and also check the atmosphere. So, once we go there, we usually know what to order and what to not buy there. We also check customers' reviews or pictures
That are shared sometimes. And stories. And yeah, that's all.
Group3-Participant1

One of the other features of Instagram that helped me discover new restaurants and restaurants according to my taste is that the algorithm generates certain food posts. Instagram, has a feature that alternates the posts, according to your let's say text, so I see a lot of photos of sliders, for example. Literally generates me a food feed.
Group2-Participant6

An emphasis was also made on how Instagram assisted restaurants in increasing their reach in comparison to 10-15 years ago where brochures and word of mouth was the way for small upcoming restaurants adding to that was the absence of the abundance of delivery services we have today.

Maybe each house used to have this, at least for us, let's say, for my house, we used to have a file that contained all these restaurant brochures. So, this is maybe a big difference compared to today. Now you can go on Instagram, you can save these posts for the restaurants you like. Basically, Instagram is helping us find a link on the main page of the brand account in the bio, this link can directly take you to the ordering websites or to their delivery page on talabat. By pressing this link, you can directly start ordering.
Group1-Participant4

So, the biggest factor that I think, I mean, the biggest change between 15 years ago, 20 years ago, and now, it's really the introduction of these delivery services, these delivery services actually changed the entire game. You know, before you had to actually, you know, tell your father, please, you know, we want to grab a burger from McDonald's, and, you know, wait for a while, until you get it, but now, you know, you're on your bed, you wake up, you just press a button.
Group5- Participant3

In terms of advertising food that has changed drastically, it went from TV commercials and flyers to Instagram posts, promos, and Snapchat stories. That's one of the biggest changes that anyone in our generation would notice.
Group1-Participant6

4.5.1 Building a successful pre-launch campaign:

With regard to capturing attention in pre-launch**,** the participants had numerous opinions, however they mainly focused on how teaser like advertisements need to be different by not only showing the food but also tell a story in a unique way. Teaser advertisements on Instagram are paid ads that are viewed by users within scrolling through the platform. In relation to the literature, the term used is native advertisements and is defined as a variety of innovative online paid advertising formats that aim to minimize interruptions to a consumer's online experience by displaying the advertising within-stream (Campbell & Marks, 2015).

They need to have, let's say, attractive teasers on their account that would allow me to visit their page. Something that will stop me from scrolling.
Group1-Participant3

Yes, teasers are something really nice and what we just watched was really good grab attention video since it diverted us from just food and told a story.
Group1-Participant4

I prefer seeing fresh ads on my feed when it comes to food, something that divert you away from just food, because in the end, the restaurant business is very competitive and what you're trying to do is attract people, and your social media platform is important.
Group4-Participant2

Instagram is considered among the leading advertising platforms for small to medium enterprises (SMEs), however users are currently bombarded with advertisements and tend to view only a few of them. Therefore, to break through the clutter, marketers need to design ads that can stop users and hold their attention long enough to process the ads cognitively before scrolling up or down to see other photos (Lee & Kim, 2020). The participants carried on and explained the type of teasers that capture their attention.

When I saw a teaser about a new coffee shop. Okay, so what I saw as user is that they are in the desert and like the guy is wearing our traditional clothes? And I thought, hmmm I don't know this is really attracting me. Because I like the clothes. So yeah, really? And the way of watching the modern presentation of our culture and it's really nice. When I went to the coffee shop it's reached my satisfaction really even the way of serving.
Group2-Participant5

Something fun, something ironic a song maybe or dance. For example, there was a show called Hamad show I believe. Yeah, they shot a video walking in the streets wearing masks. Okay, so it was also controversial because they were unlike what were used to. When he came out and saying it's just marketing for my show, there's nothing that's going to happen don't worry.
Group2-Participant3

A restaurant I know made it suspicious, because they said, Yeah, we're not going to announce the location. We're not going to finalize the menu you are going to do that. You should come and visit us and they gave a simple hunt experience for the restaurant with some hints on the location. Many people who were really into it because it is different than what we usually see.
Group3-Participant2

4.5.2 Attention Drivers:

The emphasis on irony did not go unnoticed, although irony wasn't mentioned numerously in their responds, they were all in agreement about how advertisements that convey a meaning distinct from the one it pretends to deliver are very attractive. According to Stern (1990), irony in advertising is "any remark that conveys a meaning distinct from the one it pretends to deliver,". Irony relates immensely to Schema Incongruity theory which is the condition in which a person's prior knowledge about an object does not coincide with what they are currently recognizing about the thing (Mandler 1982). Since the objective of this thesis is unveil what captures consumer attention in a cluttered environment, it is equally important to understand what type of cognitive processing should be activated in relation to those teaser advertisements. The participants mentioned (irony) as their key factor to luring attention, which coincides with the activation of bottom-up processing. Bottom-up attention is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). In the case of this research, the salient stimuli was irony.

Another factor that triggered their curiosity about upcoming independent restaurants was the use of social media influencers. Influencer marketing, at its core, is a form of social media promotion that relies on recommendations and mentions of products from influencers people who have a sizable social media following and are recognized as specialists in their field (Chen, 2020). When compared to the expense of making banner ads, television ads, outdoor ads, etc., which are always an investment layer on top of the media expenditure, influencer marketing is quite inexpensive (Ahmad, 2018; Bevilacqua, 2018).

Umm, I think as aaya said that there are lots of bloggers and influencers. So, imagine any new coffee shop or restaurant, the owner uses those influencers and gives them an invitation or pays them to build pre-launch hype. Imagine inviting like 10 or 15 influencer and all of them talk about the same restaurant as each other and every influencer has more than 1000 followers. So, it's like moving from account to another.

<u>*Group3-Participant1*</u>

It's as simple as just inviting a couple of social media influencers to the pre-launch and just have them do their thing with the stories and the tags and the hashtags and all of that? That would? I do believe that would be enough if you got if you got, let's say, two influencers with like, a million followers. I mean, let's say half of them are gonna see it. Let's say half of those followers are gonna try it. You know what I mean? Yeah, so yeah, you would get decent numbers out of it. I mean, it's, I believe it is the most efficient way. Alright, it wouldn't grab my attention but I still believe it is the most effective.

Group2-Participant5

4.5.3 Using Opinion Leaders in Campaigns:

According to the participants, the opinion leaders that are most trusted are the food bloggers and to be more specific they mainly referred to chefs due to their expertise in the food sector. Opinion leadership is a crucial component of marketing communications since it is essential for the adoption of new products and the dissemination of related information (Chan & Misra, 1990; Wang, Ting, & Wu, 2013). According to Leal, Hor-Meyll, and de Paula Pessôa (2014), opinion leaders should possess at least one of the following characteristics: be recognized as an expert on a product or service; be an engaged member of an online community; participate frequently and significantly; or be regarded by other users as having good taste in regards to purchasing decisions.

To me, it's not really important how they market the product compared to who markets the product. Sometimes I don't go to a specific restaurant just because I see a specific influencer, that is for example, known for his or her posts not to be trusted.

Group2-Participant4

Yeah. No, I don't follow many restaurants on Instagram. I tend to follow chefs because they rate each dish and their way of promoting is attractive.

Group1-Participant1

Yeah, I actually follow quite a few restaurants, but I also like following food bloggers. For example, one of them is a blogger and he's a chef at the same time. The reason I follow them is because they make the food look delicious and they can be trusted from experience. So, for

example, briskets, I have never tried it before. And I saw some videos made by a food blogger I follow. And I thought that it would be so delicious. And when I went to Abu Dhabi, I just searched for the brisket restaurant, that he mentioned and made a visit and it was amazing.
<u>Group3-Participant1</u>

I wouldn't go and visit a restaurant directly unless I see someone's opinion. Someone that I trust, like, for example, you do see sometimes famous social media people advertising for the food. Unless I see an expert's opinion on food or my friend's opinion on that restaurant, I would not visit and eat from that restaurant.
<u>Group5-Participant1</u>

4.5.4 Intention to Engage and Purchase:

According to the above, participants showed that they are attracted to ironic advertisements and opinion leaders who are trusted and recognized as experts in the food & beverage sector. Furthermore, they also demonstrated their willingness to explore the brand after their attention was captured. Lastly the participants were asked to provide a score out of 5 on how likely they're to follow the restaurant after exploring their page. The series of stages the participants described after being attracted by an advertisement is similar to the stages of (AIDA Theory). Below are some of their scores out of five on how likely they are to follow the food brand if it meets the above criteria.

it'll be for me 4.75.
<u>Group2-Participant5</u>

Right? Okay, I would say four out of five, not five. Because most of the accounts I follow them to keep track of like for later on, for example, when the right time comes, for example, thick restaurant, I would I follow it because I know that the when they release a certain item, I want to know when it says and I want to go. But anyhow, usually most of the time, I mean 10 out of 10 I would go and order for them. That's why I follow them, just to make sure not forget their name not forget other four out of five.
<u>Group4-Participant2</u>

A five most of the time. I usually save posts and I try to order that will take time to go through the list

Group1-Participant5

This question led to some straight forward answers, however an interesting action that was not accounted for before conducting the interviews was shared. The majority of the participants preferred saving the post by the brand or the influencer rather than follow the restaurant for the following reasons:

It's not really interesting to keep seeing the same product. Even if it was marketed in different ways, it is still the same sandwich or same steak. So just saving that for later is all you need.

Group3-Participant4

For me, I don't follow any kind of restaurants. I more I'm more into saving the posts, saving the post for later. Like, that's what attracts me the most like whenever I see a good restaurant or a good dish, I just save it so I can try it later instead of seeing repetitive content.

Group4-Participant2

Yes, yes, definitely. You're absolutely right. I do that. I do that I save the post, but I tend to not follow but you're absolutely right. I have actually many posts saved for food, amazingly looking steaks, expensive dishes. Yeah.

Group4-Participant4

I think at least 100 saved. Yeah. I mostly save posts. And what I typically do is that, for example, the meal I want to Try in a certain restaurant, I would save that specifically on that, and you save the post of that specifically, you know, sometimes they post a picture of certain burger or a certain I mean, I'd say whenever I just want to order food, I go through the saved posts.

Group1-Participant1

Table 5: Key Coding Constructs

Exert	***First order code***	***Second order code***	***Final construct***
"They need to have, let's say, attractive teasers on their account that would allow me to visit their page. Something that will stop me from scrolling." *"Yes, teasers are something really nice and what we just watched was really good grab attention video since it diverted us from just food and told a story."*	Teaser video ads	Native ads	Ironic Ads
"When I saw a teaser about a new coffee shop. Okay, so what I saw as user is that they are in the desert and like the guy is wearing our traditional clothes? And I thought, hmmm I don't know this is really attracting me. Because I like the clothes. So yeah, really? And the way of watching the modern presentation of our culture and it's really nice." *"Something fun, something ironic a song maybe or dance. For example, there was a show called Hamad show I believe. Yeah, they shot a video walking in the streets wearing masks. Okay, so it was also controversial because they were unlike what were used to. When he came out and saying it's just marketing for my show, there's nothing that's going to happen don't worry."*	Ads not just about food	Sarcasm	
"Umm, I think as aaya said that there are lots of bloggers and influencers. So, imagine any new coffee shop or restaurant, the owner uses those influencers and gives them an invitation or pays them to build pre-launch hype. Imagine inviting like 10 or 15 influencer and all of them talk about the same restaurant as each other and every influencer has more than 1000 followers. So, it's like moving from account to another." *"It's as simple as just inviting a couple of social media influencers to the pre-launch and just have them do their thing with the stories and the tags and the hashtags and all of that? That would? I do believe that would be enough if you got if you got, let's say, two influencers with like, a million followers. I mean, let's say half of them are gonna see it. Would get decent numbers out of it. I mean, it's, I believe it is the most efficient way.*	Large Following	Macro Influencers	Opinion Formers

Exert	***First order code***	***Second order code***	***Final construct***
"To me, it's not really important how they market the product compared to who markets the product. Sometimes I don't go to a specific restaurant just because I see a specific influencer, that is for example, known for his or her posts not to be trusted." *"Yeah. No, I don't follow many restaurants on Instagram. I tend to follow chefs because they rate each dish and their way of promoting is attractive."*	Trust and Expertise	Chefs Food bloggers Social Media Influencers	Opinion Formers
it'll be for me 4.75. *Right? Okay, I would say four out of five, not five* *a five most of the time. I usually save posts and I try to order that will take time to go through the list*	Purchase	Intention to Purchase	Intention to Purchase
I usually save posts and I try to order that will take time to go through the list *it's not really interesting to keep seeing the same product. Even if it was marketed in different ways, it is still the same sandwich or same steak. So just saving that for later is all you need.* *For me, I don't follow any kind of restaurants. I more I'm more into saving the posts, saving the post for later. Like, that's what attracts me the most like whenever I see a good restaurant or a good dish, I just save it so I can try it later instead of seeing repetitive content.* *I think at least 100 saved. Yeah. I mostly save posts. And what I typically do is that, for example, the meal I want to Try in a certain restaurant, I would save that specifically on that, and you save the post of that specifically, you know, sometimes they post a picture of certain burger or a certain I mean, I'd say whenever I just want to order food, I go through the saved posts*	Saving Posts	Form of Engagement	Intention to Engage

The theoretical foundation of this research evolved over time by the broader conceptual underpinning of salient stimuli that impact the activation of schema incongruity theory in cluttered advertising. As this research follows abductive reasoning, the majority of first order codes were identified prior to beginning the focus group interviews, however some codes that led to the final constructs (irony, opinion leaders) were identified after conducting the interviews, those codes were assisted in identifying the attention drivers needed to complete the pre-launch marketing communication model. The researcher referred back to the literature to find appropriate theoretically defined terminologies that captured the concepts of the aforementioned constructs. For instance, teaser video ads, according to Campbell & Marks (2015) is named native advertisements in the literature. Ironic advertisements in the context of this research is defined as ironic advertising as an advertisement that uses a headline that deviates from the viewers' common understanding. To capture irony, the researcher derived two codes in the first round of coding: (teaser video ads, native advertisements) and two codes in the second round of coding: (ads not just about food, sarcasm). Subsequently, all the codes were compared with the literature and "Ironic ads" could be captured by what is described in the literature as "Irony". In similar context, opinion leaders are those who have the power to influence other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions. The contruct of opinion leadership was derived through two rounds of coding. The first round of codes consisted of (trust and expertise, chefs, food bloggers, social media influencers) and the second round codes consisted of (large following, macro influencers) where the first was considered as a first order code and the latter as a second order code. Accordingly, the prior codes were compared with the literature and "Opinion Leadership" could be captured by what is described in the literature as "Opinion Leaders". Prior to beginning the interview process constructs such as (dark social, and corporate logo) were identified as drivers of attention, however after completing the data collection through open ended non leading questions, participants favored irony and opinion leadership as independent variables that positively influence the intention to explore.

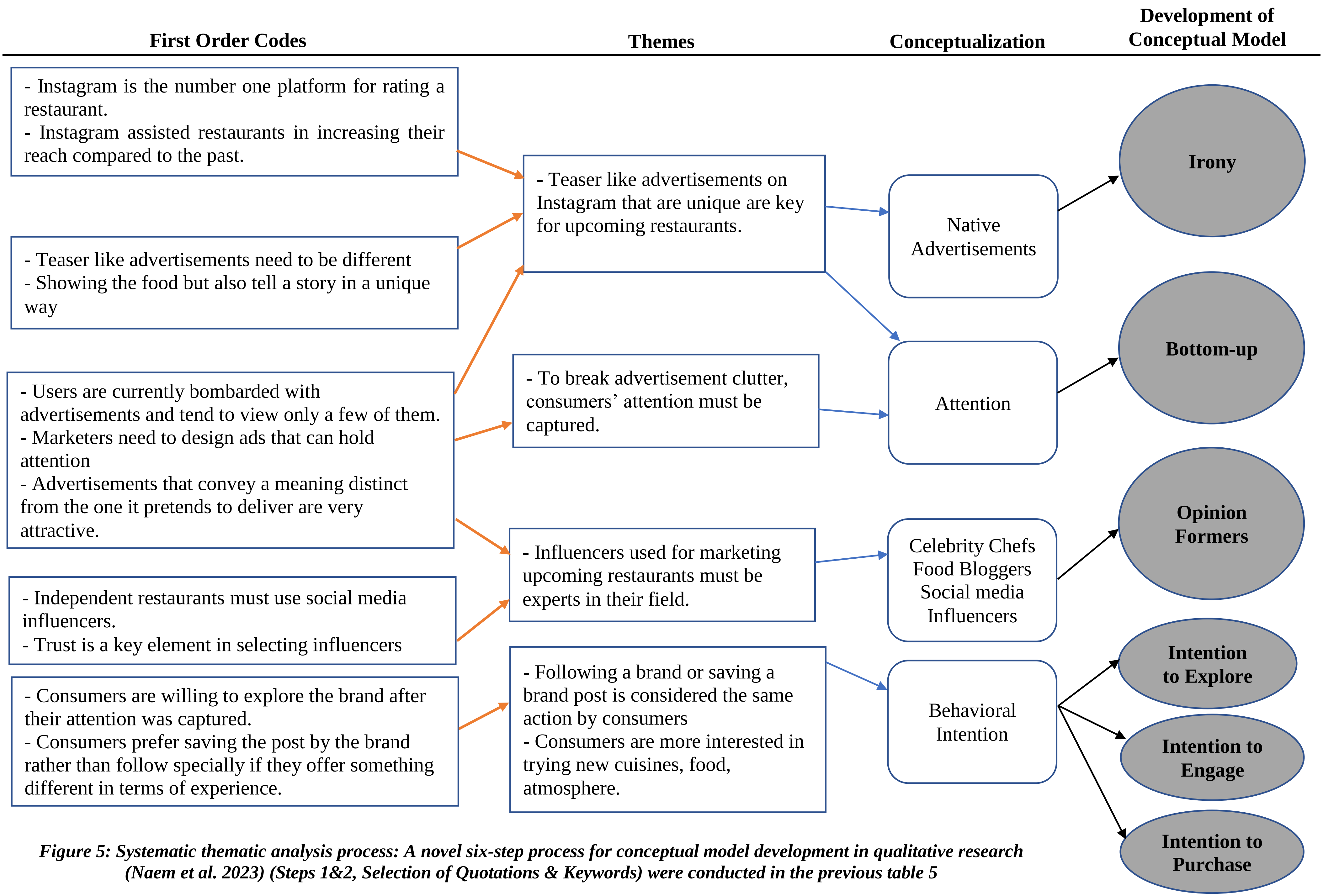


Figure 5: Systematic thematic analysis process: A novel six-step process for conceptual model development in qualitative research (Naem et al. 2023) (Steps 1&2, Selection of Quotations & Keywords) were conducted in the previous table 5

4.6 Hypothesis Development:

The findings from the qualitative section enabled the researcher to proceed with developing the hypothesis for this research as focus group interviews filled the gaps in the literature about pre-launch marketing, and attention drivers for middle eastern consumers. As mentioned earlier the initial motivation for gathering exploratory qualitative data was influenced by the lack of studies that recognizes pre-launch marketing or how it may be conceptualized as such (Kim & Hassens, 2016; Yang et al., 2020); as well as the dearth of empirical data found in cluttered social media marketing environments (Leung et al., 2022; Kim & Kim, 2018; Nafees et al., 2021). Furthermore, as this thesis follows an abductive research philosophy some elements of the conceptual were pre-identified prior to conducting the focus group interviews and then further verified afterwards. This assisted the researcher in building the theoretical framework and developing the hypothesis that will undergo empirical validation in chapters 5 and 6.

Pre-launch marketing is applicable to industries with short life cycles, such as video games, movies, and new phones such as the iPhone. These industries frequently see high demand following launch, but the peak in demand is typically followed by a sharp decline in sales (Burmester et al., 2015). Furthermore, several companies in certain sectors (like Apple and Warner Bros.) have a reputation for introducing new products, however their brands remain well-known (Little, 2022). There is an abundance of studies on pre-launching a product or service by an existing brand, contrastingly research on emerging SMEs are scarce and require further investigation. It is considered counter-productive for new businesses to apply post-launch strategies during the pre-launch period (Rathore & Ilavarasan, 2020). Pre-launch marketing is all about creating anticipation and discussion about what's to come, whereas post-launch marketing might reflect user opinions on social media following product or service testing. In order to build a successful prelaunch campaign, the qualitative findings confirm the significance of Instagram for marketing, and how it became a necessity for new businesses. Using teaser ads also known as sponsored ads on Instagram is a common marketing strategy for businesses however, this can create irritation for consumers. The vast majority of participants agreed that their Instagram feed is flooded with sponsored ads on a day to day basis, and they rarely pay attention to any of them. Once asked about ads that would capture their attention, the researcher encountered the following answers repetitively (ads that spark controversy) (ads that are funny or sarcastic) (ads that begin with something other than food). All those answers correlate with irony, hence it appeared that middle eastern consumers prefer ironic ads over other types of ads. Irony in advertising is "any remark that conveys a meaning distinct from the one it pretends to deliver" (Stern, 1990). Furthermore, participants emphasized on how important it is for the advertisement to capture their attention in order for them to explore the brand and obtain more information. According to this, a comparison between traditional ads and ironic ads is required to empirically validate the effectiveness of irony.

H1a: Attention to ironic ads has a direct positive relationship on intention to explore
H1b: Attention to traditional ads has a direct positive relationship on intention to explore

In parallel, the participants emphasized on the importance of using trusted social media influencers as part of the pre-launch advertising campaign. Fundamentally, influencer marketing is a type of social media advertising that depends on product endorsements and mentions from influencers—people with a substantial social media following who are regarded as opinion leaders in their industry (Chen, 2020). Influencer marketing is quite affordable in comparison to the cost of creating banner ads, television ads, outdoor ads, etc., which are always an additional investment layer on top of the media expenditure (Ahmad, 2018; Bevilacqua, 2018). Due to its affordability, numerous businesses relay on influencers to lure consumers, however it seems that there are still a lot of unanswered questions regarding what aspects of they require to influence the brand attitudes of their followers among academics and practitioners (Nafees, et al., 2021). The focus group interviews, identified several types of opinion leaders namely (celebrity chefs, food bloggers, and social media influencers) whom all have an influence over their followers on Instagram. Once asked about the characteristics of their preferred opinion leaders, trust and expertise were the answers that were mentioned repetitively. In relation to their answers, empirical validation is required to identify which type of opinion leader is most suitable when it comes to pre-launch marketing campaigns.

H2a: Food Bloggers have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore
H2b: Celebrity Chefs have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore
H2c: Social Media Influencers have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore

After discussing their preferences on types of ads and opinion leaders, the conversation shifted back towards their Instagram engaging and purchasing experience. Luring customers to explore a brand is a challenge for new businesses in particular as they have no prior credibility (Vianna et al,. 2016). However, in the case that a business successfully has consumers in that exploratory phase, the following step would be brand engagement and that comes in different formats. Discussions between the participants demonstrate that (commenting, liking, or even following) are not forms of engagement they would indulge in. Middle eastern Instagram users are more discrete and prefer saving brand posts, or sharing posts with friends and family as mentioned repetitively by the focus groups. Furthermore, the form of content in the existing Instagram page does play a role in how likely consumers are to engage. Some participants mentioned (new experiences), (new type of food), (new cuisine) demonstrated by the brand can positively influence the relationship between their intention to explore and intention to engage. Novel foods are defined as new food products or cuisines that are unfamiliar to the common consumer (Torri, Tuccilo, Bonelli, Piriano, & Leone, 2020). According to the prior information more knowledge is required about favorable types of engagement and the role novel foods play between consumers' intention to explore and intention to engage, hence the following hypothesis was established.

H3: The intention to explore has a direct positive relationship on the intention to engage
H4: Novel Foods moderates the relationship between intention to explore and the intention to engage

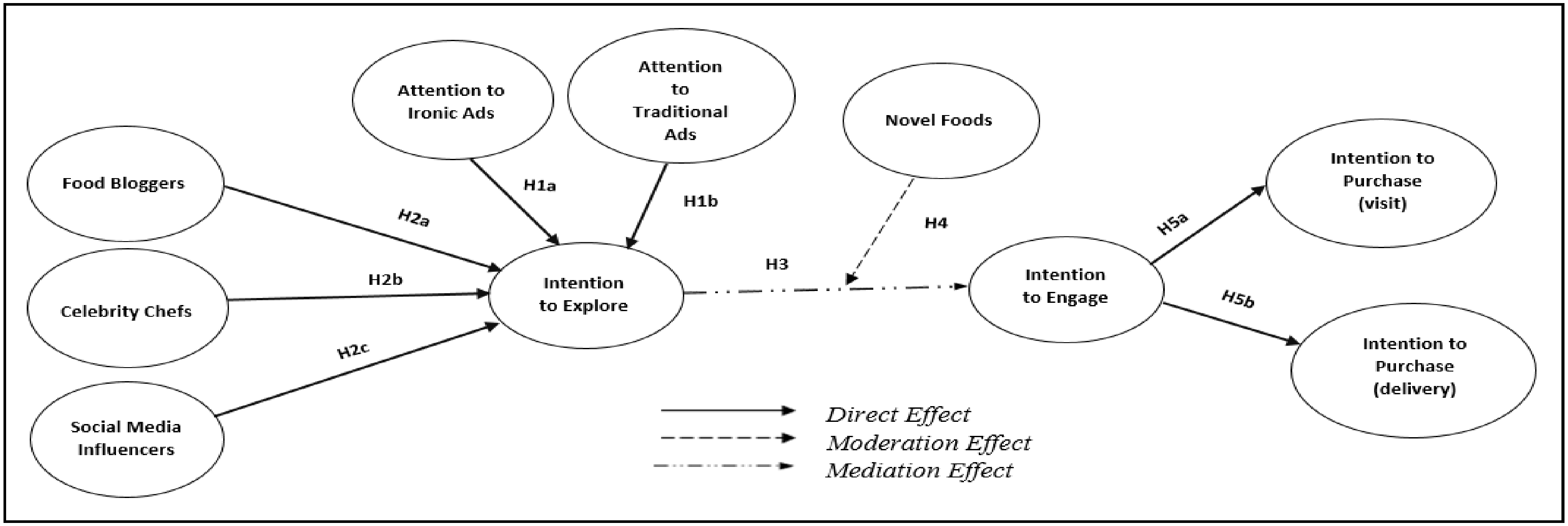
Lastly, the participants were asked on how likely they are to purchase from a new restaurant after undergoing the prior stages starting from the type ads they prefer leading to brand engagement. The researcher received positive feedback justifying a relationship the intention to engage and intention to purchase, however the participants pointed out an interesting piece of information. The vast majority, preferred to make their restaurant purchases through websites or delivery applications as opposed to visiting the restaurant. According to this information the following hypothesis was developed.

H5a: The intention to engage has a direct positive relationship on the intention to purchase through restaurant visit
H5b: The intention to engage has a direct positive relationship on the intention to purchase through delivery

4.7 Summary:

This chapter builds a bridge with the other phases (phase 2, phase 3) of the methodology. It has an emphasis on attention drivers that draw in customers in the food and beverage industry on Instagram, the aforementioned chapter assisted the researcher by providing a thorough grasp of pre-launch marketing in the Middle East. This strategy was chosen because there was a dearth of material in the literature and the researcher needed to learn more about the intended market before establishing the research hypothesis and theoretical framework. The participant selection for the focus group interviews was conducted through purposive sampling, as they had to meet a specific criterion for participation. The data was coded deductively as this research follows an abductive approach. Some codes were established prior to data analysis as part of the open coding stage that was then followed with axial, and selective coding. The findings provided the needed information for the researcher to finalize the theoretical framework (figure 6). The reasoning behind the theoretical framework is then explained in the hypothesis development section.

Figure 6: Pre-Launch Marketing Theoretical Framework



H1a: Attention to ironic ads has a direct positive relationship on intention to explore

H1b: Attention to traditional ads has a direct positive relationship on intention to explore

H2a: Food Bloggers have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore

H2b: Celebrity Chefs have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore

H2c: Social Media Influencers have a direct positive relationship on the intention to explore

H3: The intention to explore has a direct positive relationship on the intention to engage

H4: Novel Foods moderates the relationship between intention to explore and the intention to engage

H5a: The intention to engage has a direct positive relationship on the intention to purchase through restaurant visit

H5b: The intention to engage has a direct positive relationship on the intention to purchase through delivery

Chapter 5. Experiment Design (Phase 2):

The interviews paved the way to understand pre-launch marketing, and eliminate constructs that were unnecessary such as the usage of independent variable WhatsApp advertising or moderator corporate logo. Participants provided re-assurance that the conceptual framework is viable and provided introduced the construct of opinion leaders to the researcher. More importantly they all came together when supporting incongruent ads to capture attention and recommended the use of irony hence further investigation was needed. The connection between focus group interviews and experiment design came through testing consumer attentiveness to ironic advertising. This was recommended by the vast majority of the focus group participants and that's where the need for experimental design came from.

The first section of the next chapter discusses how to operationalize constructs into practice. The chapter next turns its attention to phase 3 of the methodology, going over the experiment design, pilot study, experiment structure and results. The chapter ends with an explanation of the paired sample t-test along with a summary of the most important results from the Phase 2 study.

5.1 Construct Selection:

Selecting constructs is the bread and butter of any quantitative study and when creating them, the first step is to define (i.e., specify the meaning of) the target construct. The selection of objects to be included in the experimental item pool will be guided by a clear definition of the construct and its boundaries. There will be multiple sets of objects based on different construct definitions. In order to prevent the scale's content from unintentionally straying into other domains, it is important to understand where the phenomenon's boundaries lie (DeVellis, 1991). Additionally, a vague definition makes it difficult to decide which items should be included and excluded depending on their psychometric characteristics. Low correlations, for instance, between a questionnaire's individual items and its overall score may be the result of subpar items or items that evaluate a multidimensional construct. Items that have no predictive or explanatory potential as a result of the incorrect construct theory will lead to wasted time and resources (Streiner & Norman, 1995). Additionally, a precise and unambiguous description is necessary for the construct validation procedure, which examines whether the indicators accurately reflect the concept (Wallander &

Varni, 1992). For this thesis, all the constructs were defined accurately in relation to the story line behind the theoretical framework.

5.2 Operationalizing Constructs:

Miller et al. (2009) define construct operationalization as: *"...the process of linking a construct definition to one or more specific, concrete indicators that can be measured...this can be challenging when there are no existing instruments to measure the construct"* (Miller et al., 2009, p. 25). Phase 1 of this thesis (previous chapter) provides important first-hand consumer insights into how attention to Instagram advertising is driven in the middle east, laying a significant foundation from which future research may draw. When operationalizing a construct, especially when choosing the factors to use, Brace (2004) suggests: *"...if there is no existing set of attitude or attribute dimensions that have been proven to represent the issues in the market under consideration, then they will need to be developed...ideally the dimensions should be developed through a preliminary stage of qualitative research, designed specifically to determine the range of emotions, attitudes and perceptions that exist and that are relevant to the study and its objectives. The principal purpose of the preliminary study is to provide the attitude dimensions that are to be measured for strength of agreement in the quantitative survey"* (Brace, 2004, p. 99).

The findings of Phase 1 form the core basis of attention to Instagram ads in the middle eastern food & beverage sector. These findings enable the continuation of this methodology through survey and experiment design. Phase 2 of this study begins by adopting the use of experiment design to measure attention to ads, followed with a survey design in phase 3 to test the rest of the factors.

5.3 Experiment Design for Measuring Attention:

Experimental design begins by the specification of all aspects of an experiment. Selecting particular aspects that are dependent on the particular problem, the resources at hand, and understanding the purpose of the experiment. Before beginning the process of collecting data for an experiment, the motivations behind the experiment must be thoroughly considered and tested (Chaloner & Verdinelli, 1995). The motive behind conducting an experiment for this study is to measure what type of advertisements capture consumer attention on cluttered environments such as Instagram. Bottom-up attention is a mental activity that is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). In previous studies, the most common approach in measuring attentional bias was through eye tracking whilst watching videos or photos of different advertisements (Lee & Ahn, 2012). This study adopted the approach of Norris & Coleman (1992) along with some amendments to the approach in order to suit Instagram advertising.

The subjects were informed that they are participating in an experiment concerned with "people's responses to Instagram advertisements". They were shown ten advertisements that feature a variety of products from the food and beverage. In order to test the effectiveness of irony in luring consumer attention in cluttered environments, they were presented with five ads that are considered traditional with no irony while the other five ads contained irony.

5.3.1 Pilot Study 1 (Experiment):

Prior to conducting the experiment, pilot study 1 was conducted with five participants, and some modifications were made in response to respondents' comments and the advice of experiment design experts, such as the addition of extra "ad recall" questions and changes to the layout to make it more user friendly. Nonetheless after receiving positive verbal comments about the design and relevancy of the items from the participants, the next stage was to proceed with pilot study 2 along with the changes mentioned above and a very similar setting to the actual experiment design.

5.3.2 Pilot Study 2 (Experiment):

Twenty subjects (n=20) were invited to voluntarily participate in this experiment based on the same criteria from the qualitative study. Subject were presented with ten advertisements from the food and beverage sector through a large projector screen and then handed a tablet to answer questions related to those advertisements. Five ads had an ironic factor to them meaning they began by expressing an element that does not distinctly relate to food. The other five were traditional advertisements that originated well with consumer schema and had no irony. Furthermore, the ten videos were shuffled to avoid bias to any particular advertisement. According to Brown & Rothschild (1993) advertising clutter initiates at ten ads therefore this provides a justification for selecting a total of ten in this research. The pre-experimental control check had established that the average viewing time for each subject was approximately 10 minutes; accordingly, after watching the videos the participants were asked to complete a five-minute online puzzle. The puzzle was used to provide more rigor the experiment by testing how strongly did ads resonate with the participants after undergoing a different activity. The questionnaires were handed out through tablets shortly after completing the puzzle in the order in which they were described above. Subjects were not allowed to backtrack in the survey questions in order to change or supplement their responses to earlier questions. The questionnaire has eight questions, four would measure (Ad Recognition) and the other four measure (Ad Recall) from Norris & Coleman (1992). After completing the eight questions the participants will undergo demographic questions. Each of the eight questions were presented in different pages while the demographic questions were all in the same page.

Q1 (Ad Recognition Ironic) (Max score: 2)	Q2 (Ad Recognition traditional) (Max score: 2)	Q3 (Ad Recall ironic) (Max score: 1)	Q4 (Ad Recall traditional) (Max score: 1)	Q5 (Ad Recall ironic) (Max score: 1)	Q6 (Ad Recall traditional) (Max score: 1)	Q7 (Ad Recall ironic) (Max score: 1)	Q8 (Ad Recall traditional) (Max score: 1)

The objective behind the first question is to test the participant recognition of characters from the ironic ads while placed between characters from other random ads. Similarly, the second question tests the participants' recognition of food from the traditional ads while places between food from random ads. From the third to the eighth question, the objective is to tests the participant recall of a brand name from the ironic ads and the traditional ads aligned with more questions on recognition. After conducting pilot study 2, further changes were made to the experiment such as the inclusion of (intention to explore) which is a successor to bottom-up attention in the theoretical framework (figure 5) along with more manipulation checks. The question scoring was also set, and the maximum a participant can score in each set of ironic and traditional related questions is 5 when summed.

Survey Link → https://forms.gle/9ZjS75FPVVBLNt7XA

Online puzzle → https://www.puzzleplayground.com/five_minutes_to_escape

5.3.3 Actual Experiment:

After receiving approval from Brunel’s ethics committee the actual experiment was conducted on a sample of sixty-two participants (n=62). The participants were selected based on the same criteria of the qualitative study table (3) voluntarily. Through personal connections and social media platforms participants were recruited and interviewed prior to the experiment to insure they followed the inclusion criteria. In addition, the below guidelines were included to enhance experiment rigor based on experts in the experiments in the field.

- The sample size was for the experiment determined through (G-power) as it is an accurate tool that allows the user to determine sample size based on a wide variety of tests (Kang H. , 2021).
- (Intention to explore) was added in the experiment survey as a measurement to be included within the experiment as it is directly linked to attention in the framework. This construct was added at the end of the survey after recommendations from experiment experts.
- Control variables & manipulation check were added to the experiment procedure.
- A within experiment design was justified based on how Instagram is used in reality.
- The survey data will be transformed from google forms to SPSS, then undergo a paired sample T-test.

In terms of determining the sample size, as we are using a paired sample t-test the recommended statistical test is (difference between two dependent means, matched pairs). A one tail test and 0.8 was used for the power (1-β err prob). The output using G-power demonstrated the need for using a sample size of sixty-two (n=62).

Control Variables:

- Time of day: All the experiments were conducted in the afternoon, a time that is convenient for all participants.
- All groups had an average viewing time of 10 minutes for all the advertisements.
- Participant experience: All the participants had used Instagram for over 3 years hence all had good experience.
- Ad shuffle: The ads were shuffled similarly for all the groups participating in the study.

5.3.4 Manipulation Check:

In order to verify that the 10 ads presented to the participants meet the criteria (Ironic-Traditional) a survey of 10 questions was sent out to describe each advertisement. After watching an ad, the participants had an option between (Traditional, Typical, Ironic, Sarcastic, Both Ironic & Sarcastic) to describe the advertisement they watched. The survey results demonstrated that participants clearly rated each ad as intended demonstrating that they recognize the difference between both types of ads.

5.3.5 Within Subject Design:

There are two types of experiment designs, between subject and within subject design. Between-groups or between-subjects research design: distinct subjects are divided to groups to evaluate different conditions, exposing each group to a single user interface. Repeated measurements or within-subjects research design: subjects are exposed to the same condition, in the case of this study it is advertising clutter on Instagram. In reality all Instagram users are exposed to both conditions (ironic and traditional advertisements) at the same time while on the platform hence the more feasible approach to this experiment is a within subject design (Charness, Gneezy, & Kuhn, 2012).

5.3.5 Paired Sample T-test:

The t-test for dependent samples checks whether the mean values of dependent samples differ significantly from each other. In the case of this experiment, dependent samples are the mean values for ironic and traditional ads. The pairs results will be from measurements on the same individuals. This test was selected as a statistical tool to measure the difference between the participants' scores after watching the ironic and traditional ads (Kruschke, 2013).

The paired sample t-test is used to determine if means of the same group differ from one another under various circumstances (before and after intervention). For instance, you might wish to compare the effectiveness of a medicine administered to the same set of patients before and after testing it on them. For this research, a paired sample t-test is employed to compare the results of the group after watching both sets of advertisements (ironic & traditional). A total of eight questions are distributed to the participants after watching the videos excluding demographic questions. The maximum a participant can score is ten points, five points are distributed among the four questions about the ironic ads while the other five points are distributed among the questions about the traditional ads. The participants' scores for both sets of questions are separated and compared through a paired sample t-test.

H0: There is no significant difference in attention between ironic and traditional ads.
H1: There is a significant difference in attention between ironic and traditional ads.

Paired sample t-test assumptions (Kruschke, 2013)**:**

- The dependent variable must be continuous (interval/ratio).
- The observations are independent of one another.
- The dependent variable should be approximately normally distributed.
- The dependent variable should not contain any outliers.

5.4 Results:

Mean & Standard Deviation:	**Skew & Kurtosis:**
To test the hypothesis between the attention to ironic ads (M= 4.7667, SD=0.56832) and attention to traditional ads (M=2.4667, SD= 0.86037) a paired samples t-test was performed through SPSS.	*Ensuring normally distributed differences in scores was satisfied as the skew and kurtosis levels were estimated at -2.428 and 5.301 for ironic ads and 0.284 and -0.433 for traditional ads, respectively, which is less than maximum allowable values for a t-test (i.e., skew <|2.0| and kurtosis <|9.0|; (Posten, 1984).*
P-Value:	**Cohen's |d|:**
The p-value recorded was <0.001 at a significant level of 0.05 therefore, the data sample provides strong enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in attention between ironic and traditional ads.	*Cohen's |d| was also used to judge the magnitude of the effect. Accordingly, Cohen's (1988) conventions for judging the magnitude of an effect are: |d|= 0.20 (small), |d|= 0.50 (medium), and |d|= 0.80 or above is (large). In regards to this study the reported |d| was =1.08, therefore based on the conventions stated earlier, the difference in means can be described as large.*

Table 6: Experiment Results

5.5 Summary:

Based on the above it was concluded that middle eastern Instagram users are more likely to be attentive when exposed to an ironic advertisement as opposed to a traditional advertisement in a cluttered environment. The experiment results successfully align with the literature review and theoretical framework, hence the need for initiating phase 3 of this methodology which is the survey questionnaire. The empirical validation of ironic ads as an attention driver allowed the researcher to proceed with phase 3 and test how the other constructs correlate with each other in order to empirically validate the pre-launch marketing theoretical framework (figure 6).

Chapter 6: Survey Questionnaire (Phase 3)

In the previous section, attention was measured through experiment design by testing the participants' attentiveness to ironic ads compared to traditional ads. The reason for using this approach is the need to build a similar setting of a common Instagram user. Participants found the approach relatable to their everyday Instagram experience as they were put in a cluttered advertising environment. After empirically validating ironic ads as a predecessor to capturing consumer attention in a cluttered Instagram setting, the interaction between irony and rest of the constructs from the theoretical framework had to be measured through a survey questionnaire.

This chapter turns its attention to phase 3 of the methodology, going over the quantitative research technique, pilot study, questionnaire design and structure, data collection methods, and sampling strategy. The chapter ends with an explanation of the SPSS & AMOS data analysis process along with a summary of the most important results from the phase 3 study.

Wilson (2006) states that in the event that exploratory primary research such as a qualitative study is conducted before a quantitative research study, the results can be utilized to determine what questions should be asked, how to approach specific topics, the best way to phrase questions, and the appropriate statements to use for rating scales. The characteristics of respondents may have an impact on the questions that are asked because the researcher will need to ascertain which subjects the respondents are likely to know enough about or remember, whether they would be reluctant to answer out of privacy concerns or sensitivity, and how relevant they believe a given topic to be. (Wilson, 2006). For this study, participants are asked questions that measure (Irony, Opinion Leaders, Attention, Intention to explore, Novel Foods, Intention to Engage & Intention to Purchase) in an Instagram setting. All the questions align with the food & beverage sector in the middle east and participants must follow specific criteria in order to participate mentioned in (table 7).

CRITERIA	REASON FOR CRITERIA
AT LEAST 2-YEARS EXPERIENCE USING INSTAGRAM	A 2-year period is enough for a person to grasp all the Instagram tools and develop a solid following of brands.
YOU HAVE A LIKING/PASSION FOR FOOD ON INSTAGRAM	In order to support the Instagram algorithm and have regular food advertisements as part of their feed.
PARTICIPANT MUST BE AN ARAB	The study is about the Arab consumer in particular, hence the participant must be an Arab.
MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE OR ABOVE	In most Arab countries the legal age is 21years or above hence in order to remain aligned with the law the participant selection was set out as 21.

Table 7: Survey Inclusion Criteria

6.1 Pilot Study (Survey):

A pilot study was carried out using 70 questionnaires (via Google Forms) to check for face validity and content validity. After receiving feedback from respondents, minor changes were made to the survey, such as changing the social media influencers at that time to someone more well-known to the public, improving user friendliness, and further advice on survey layout from several marketing academics. The pilot study participants provided positive verbal comments, complimenting the questionnaire's structure and relevancy of the questions as well as the thorough instructions and, through out the survey layman-friendly terminology was used. Ten constructs were measured using a total of 60 items, which were 5-point Likert scales (strongly disagree to strongly agree & highly unlikely to highly likely). Additionally, the pilot study included certain attention-check questions, as recommended by academic experts. In order to assess the validity and reliability of the items, Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency measure was used, and the 60 items were analyzed using SPSS. Results at this stage indicated a high level of internal consistency and reliability among the ten dimensions of the pre-launch marketing framework for example: Celebrity Chef (0.90), Social Media Influencer (0.83), Food Blogger (0.85), Ironic ads (0.73), Traditional ads (0.65), Intention to Explore (0.82), Novel Food (0.83), Intention to Engage (0.68), Purchase through visit (0.78), and Purchase through delivery (0.85). These results appear to be consistent with the narrative of the pre-launch framework without needing any alterations, a key variable in assessing the dependability of Cronbach's alpha coefficients is sample size. Research has indicated that the number of items in the scale affects the sample size required for a reasonable assessment of Cronbach's alpha (Karakaya & Alparslan, 2022). Furthermore, Thevasthasan (2022) indicated that reliability estimates increase with sample sizes; for high reliability estimates, at least 100 individuals are advised. Hence, it is expected for the Cronbach alpha coefficients to increase for once the actual survey is conducted.

6.2 Questionnaire structure and design:

The questionnaire respondents went through a series of questions about their preferences in terms of advertising in the food and beverage sector that began with pre-screening questions to understand whether or not the participant is suitable and meets the survey criteria. Those questions were about whether or not the participant uses social media, what type of social media platforms they use, their liking for food, and knowledge on opinion leaders in the food and beverage field. If the participant does not meet the required criteria they will be thanked and the survey will end after completing the pre-screening questions. The second part, which represents the core of the survey contains a set of questions that measure (Irony, Opinion Leaders, Attention, Intention to explore, Novel Foods, Intention to Engage & Intention to Purchase) in an Instagram setting. The question's follow a story telling approach that correlates with the order of events in the framework (figure 5). These questions replicate the series of events that an Instagram user undergoes when scrolling Instagram, pausing to view an advertisement that captured their attention, exploring the brand, engaging with the brand and lastly the intention to engage and purchase. The final part of the survey includes demographic questions e.g. gender, age, education, and nationality. (See Appendix 4 for measurement scales used, Appendix 6 for final version of questionnaire).

6.3 Data Collection:

The questionnaire was sent out via (Google Form) on social media platforms and WhatsApp through the assistance of other academics in the middle east that also conducted numerous surveys. The survey was sent out to Instagram pages and WhatsApp groups that were supervised by academics with years of experience in survey participation. These groups and pages have received over 3000 surveys in the past and continue to help researchers in reaching their intended demographic. In addition to ensure that ensure that respondents were actually paying attention, carefully considering the questions and providing responses that were reflective, consistent and true to their thinking, after completing the pre-screening questions if the participant does not meet criteria or qualify they will be kindly thanked and they survey will end. A total of 54 responses were excluded from the sample. These responses were either withdrawn due to inconsistent scoring questions, not meeting the pre-screening criteria, or not recognizing any of the related opinion leaders used in the survey. The data was collected within approximately 2 weeks, which is a relatively realistic time as there was no market research company utilized in the process. Furthermore, the survey entries were continuously monitored by the researcher to ensure all inconsistent scores are withdrawn from the data and reached a total of 323 valid respondents.

6.4 Data Analysis:

The data analysis for this study is divided into four stages: (1) descriptive statistics of the respondents (2) exploratory factor analysis (EFA); (3) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the measurement model; and (4) Structural Equation Modelling analysis to test the hypothesized relationships. Researchers should conduct the two multivariate analyses, EFA and CFA, according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). These analyses can aid in determining the factor structure of the measures, assess the internal reliability of a dataset (EFA), check the consistency of the measures of the constructs, and determine whether the data fits the hypothesized measurement model.

Several prior studies have followed an EFA with a CFA within the same data, despite criticisms of the approach that say it allows for the possibility of capitalizing on chance and makes it impossible to replicate results (e.g. Chin, 1998; Chin and Todd, 1995; Hurley et al., 1997). Multiple past studies have combined an EFA/PFA with a CFA on the same set of data (e.g. Andrews et al., 1994; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Conducting an EFA can be a helpful initial step prior to CFA, according to Gerbing and Hamilton (1996), especially if the data were generated using a priori theoretical model which aligns with the approach used for this study.

6.4.1 Descriptive Statistics Stage 1:

#	Country	%13+	Potential Reach	QOQ
1	Kazakhstan	72%	10,000,000	+6 %
2	Brunei	71%	250,000	+4 %
3	Iceland	67%	190,000	+6 %
4	Kuwait	66%	2,600,000	+5 %
5	Turkey	66%	44,000,000	+5 %
6	Cayman Islands	65%	36,000	+0 %
7	Guam	63%	84,000	+4 %
8	Sweden	63%	5,400,000	+2 %
9	Bahrain	61%	1,114,700	+3 %
10	Chile	60%	3,700,000	+6 %

Table 8: Countries with highest potential Instagram reach

Some of the largest Instagram markets worldwide are found in the middle east. Three middle east countries are ranked in the Top 20 worldwide for the largest potential advertisement viewers by country: Egypt ranks 20 (with 19 million), Saudi Arabia ranks 16 (with 17 million), and Turkey ranks 6 (with 44 million). Even more middle east countries are represented in the Top 20 when examining potential advertisement reach. With Kuwait (4th), Turkey (5th), and Bahrain (9th). In all the aforementioned countries, almost half of their population uses the visual social sharing app (Radcliffe, 2021).

Given that this is unquestionably a very vast population to study, how these individuals are chosen and represented will determine how accurate the predictions about the traits and behavior of a huge population is made from a small sample (McDaniel & Gates, 2009).Using purposive sampling, the current study gathered a total of 323 questionnaires, distributed about equally to both genders from the same ethnic background. Purposive sampling techniques steer clear of random sampling and ensure that certain types of individuals are included that follow a very specific criterion that is purposeful towards the research study’s goals and objectives. Using a purposive strategy is justified by the presumption that, in light of this study's aim, certain categories of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds may have significant and divergent opinions regarding the concepts and problems under investigation. Therefore, necessitating their exclusion from the sample (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986).

Any participant undergoing this study must go through a set of pre-screening questions that will determine their eligibility. Furthermore, the food sector comes in second worldwide as the most advertised sector on Instagram (Turnto, 2022), hence the vast majority of the middle eastern population have been exposed to food ads on the visual sharing app. This huge following in regards to food was demonstrated through a study by Crowd Analyzer, (2022). Research shows that out of 44 million Instagram users from Arab countries (Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) a total of 28 million show interest in food & drinks on Instagram.

Country	Population	Instagram users	% of total survey
Kuwait	4,259,500	2,608,200	31.63%
Jordan	10,185,500	3,940,234	9.95%
Bahrain	1,690,900	1,144,700	4.34%
United Arab Emirates	9,869,000	5,255,300	6.63%
Saudi Arabia	34,719,000	17,039,800	10.46%
Egypt	113,210,388	19,200,355	8.67%
Oman	5,081,600	2,253,500	3.57%
Lebanon	6,830,600	2,494,700	4.85%
Syria	17,425,600	3,223,888	4.34%
Qatar	2,113,000	1,238,500	7.40%
Iraq	40,063,400	14,689,300	8.16%

Table 9: Nationalities Participating in the Survey

This research study will not set any minimum eligibility criteria for the participants' number of food preferences, number of restaurants followed, number of food bloggers followed, or chefs followed on Instagram. Following on the same criteria of the experiment design found in table 7 the participants need at least 2-years' experience using Instagram, have a liking/passion for food on Instagram, must be an Arab, must be 21 years of age or above participation. When it comes to advertisement viewing frequency, the average person views around 76 online advertisements per day (Anderson, 2023), therefore the participants' undergoing the survey are most likely exposed to ads on a day to day basis. The minimum age for participating in the survey is set to 21, in order to comply with most Arab countries as the common consent age is 21 years and above. After investigating the descriptive data, it was apparent that the participants were 53% males and 47% females. Furthermore, as can be seen below in figure 6, all the 323 participants are using Instagram along with other social media platforms such as, Facebook, snapchat, tiktok, and twitter. Another observation is that all the participants' used at least 1 social media platform along with Instagram.

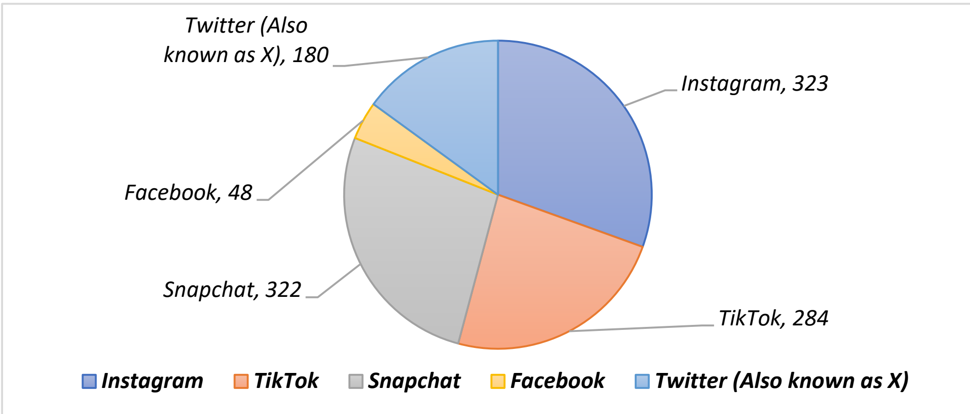


Figure 7: Social Media aps used by participants

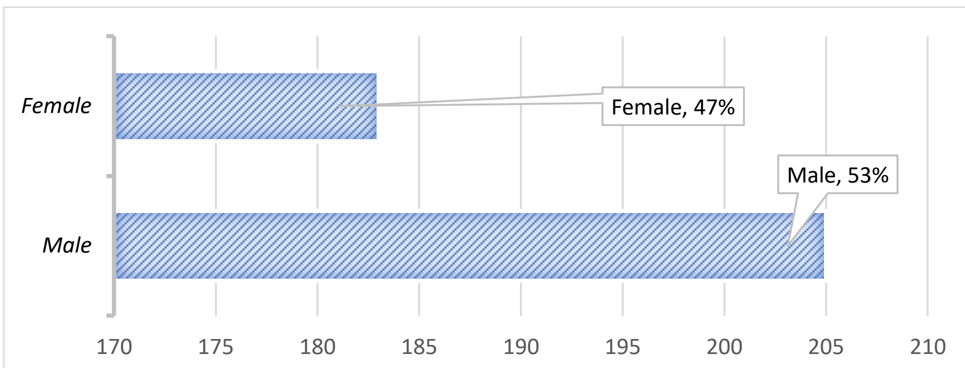


Figure 8: Overview of male and female participants

An appropriate variety of job experience was also included in the sample, as seen in the graph below (Figure #), which increases the sample's validity and population representation.

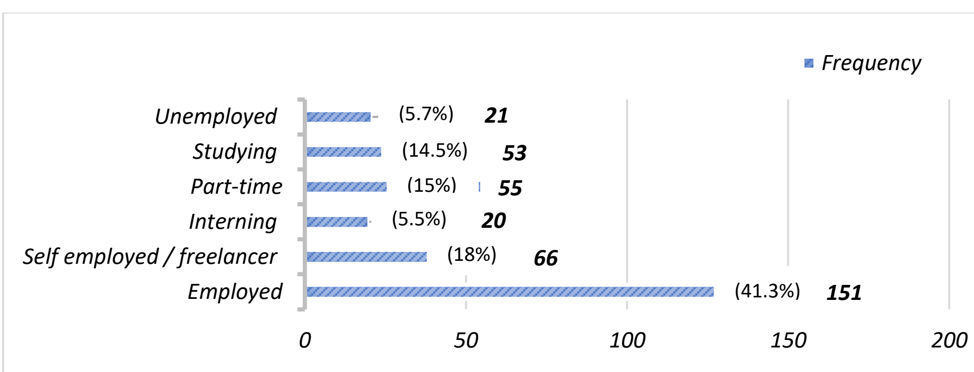


Figure 9: Overview of sample's current employment

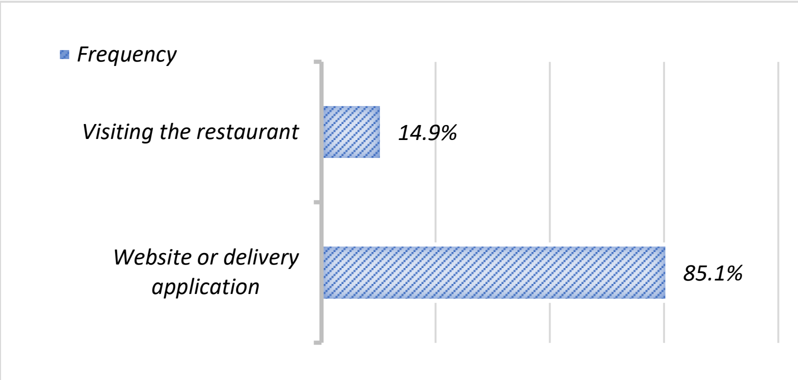


Figure 11: Overview of sample's way of purchase

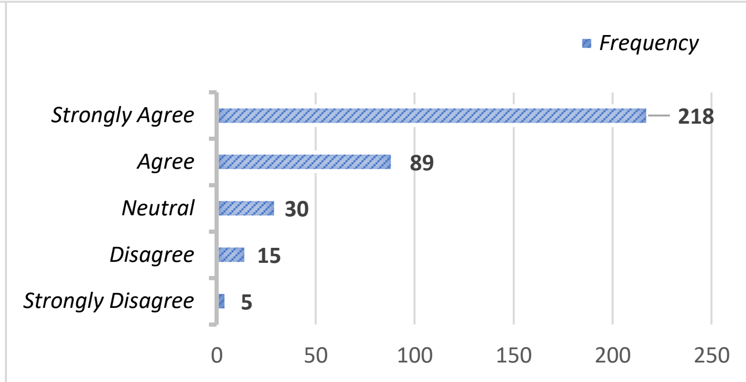


Figure 10: Overview of sample's intention to check a new restaurant's Instagram prior to making a purchase

The graphs above represent consumers' preference regarding their method of food purchase, and to what extent they are inclined to check a restaurant's Instagram before making the purchase. As shown in (figure 10) 85.1% of the participants prefer ordering online rather than that visiting the restaurant. This coincides with Ogundimu, (2023), as consumers in the middle east and GCC in particular have a never ending demand for convenience specially when it comes to food. In terms of checking Instagram before trying a new restaurant, the vast majority agree on that it is a habit to check and this demonstrates how important Instagram is, especially for up-coming businesses.

The age of the participants is demonstrated in the below chart. The majority of the participants in the analytical survey are from age 21 to 30 which represents Gen Z and millennials. The largest portion of Instagram users worldwide are between 18-34 years of age representing 62% of the total user base (Statista, 2024).

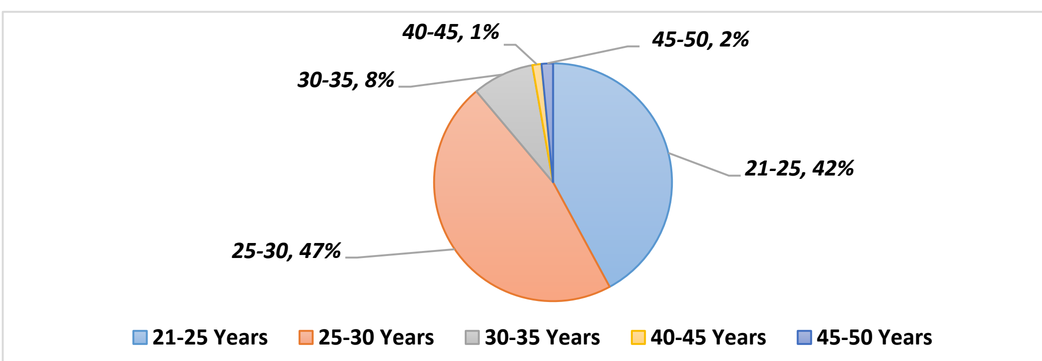


Figure 12: Overview of sample's age

Figure 14: Overview of sample's attentiveness to an Ironic Advertisement

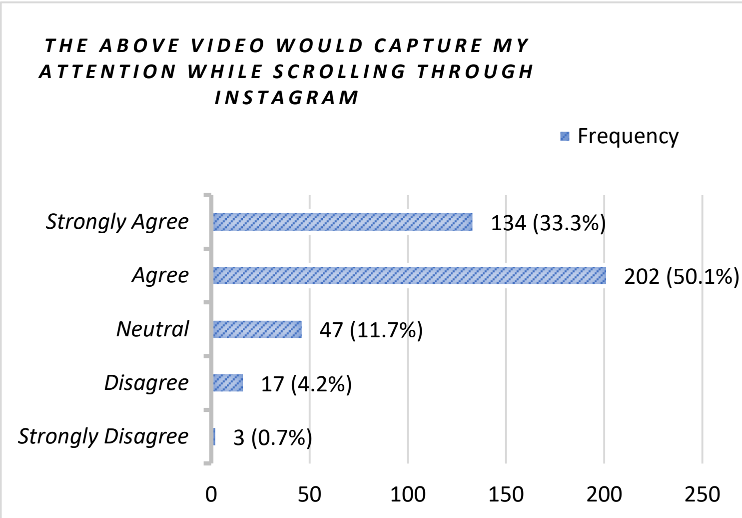
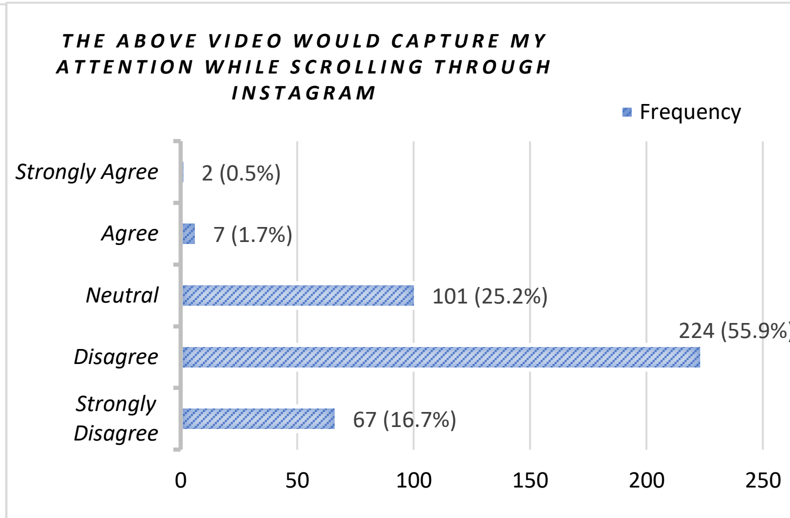


Figure 13: Overview of sample's attentiveness to a Traditional Advertisement



After examining the key factor to capturing consumer attention (figures 12-13) it was apparent that consumers engage more with ironic ads compared to traditional. This equates to the theoretical framework that in order to capture Instagram users' attention in cluttered environments, Ironic ads must be used by up-coming businesses. In addition, the results from the graphs are similar to those from the focus group interviews and experiment design which translates the strength of this study's hypothesis. Although this study was conducted in Kuwait, it had participants from 10 different middle eastern countries mentioned in (table 9). As opposed to the above figures which represent entirety of the participants, the below figures (15-18) demonstrate how the largest participating nationalities Egyptians (8.67%), Saudis (10.46%), and Jordanians (9.95%) reacted to Ironic ads when compared to traditional ads and their responses compliment the findings of (figure 12).

Following the completion of data collection, the data was exported from the Google Forms Survey platform to SPSS in Excel format. After that, the variables were entered and the data was cleansed (missing values were substituted with unique values because the survey was routing-based). Since this study includes 12 nationalities the next section includes a (common method variance, multivariate analysis, and variance inflation factor) to insure that results can be generalized among all middle eastern nationalities.

Figure 16: Overview of (Saudi) participant's attentiveness to an Ironic Advertisement

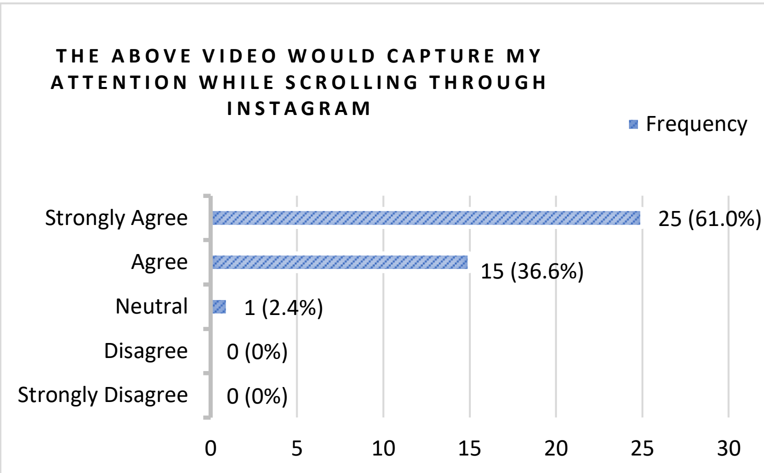


Figure 15: Overview of (Saudi) participant's attentiveness to a Traditional Advertisement

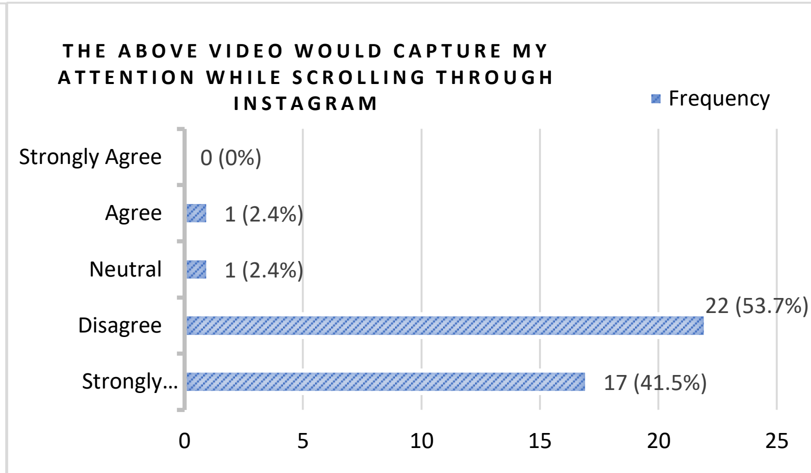


Figure 18: Overview of (Jordanian) participant's attentiveness to an Ironic Advertisement

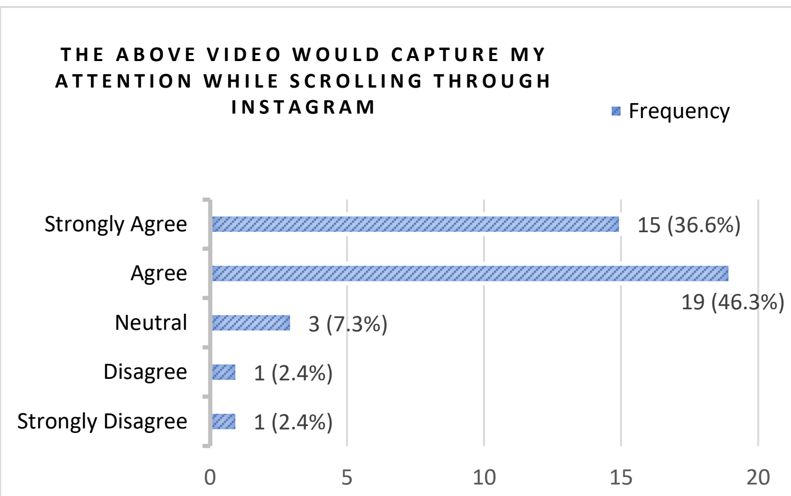


Figure 17: Overview of (Jordanian) participant's attentiveness to a Traditional Advertisement

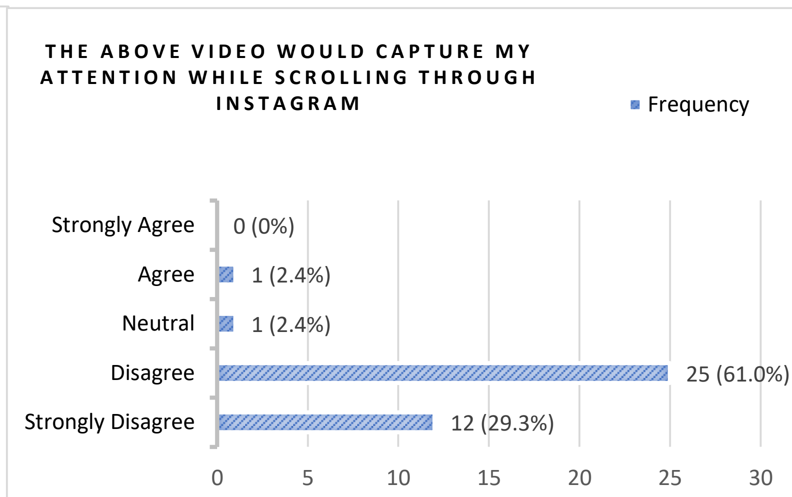


Figure 20: Overview of (Egyptian) participant's attentiveness to an Ironic Advertisement

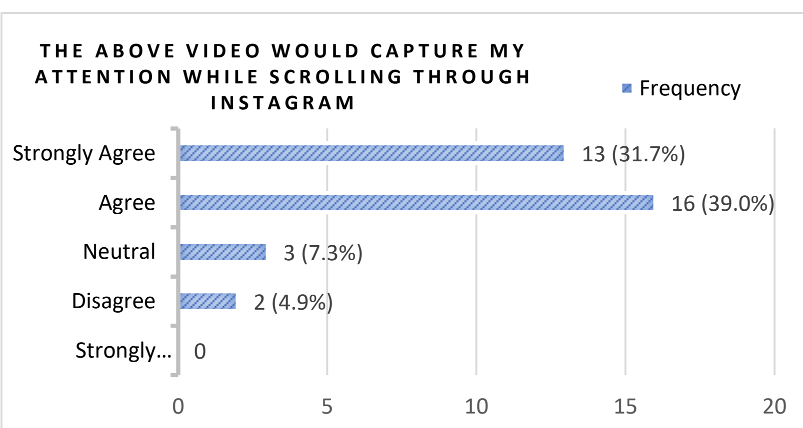
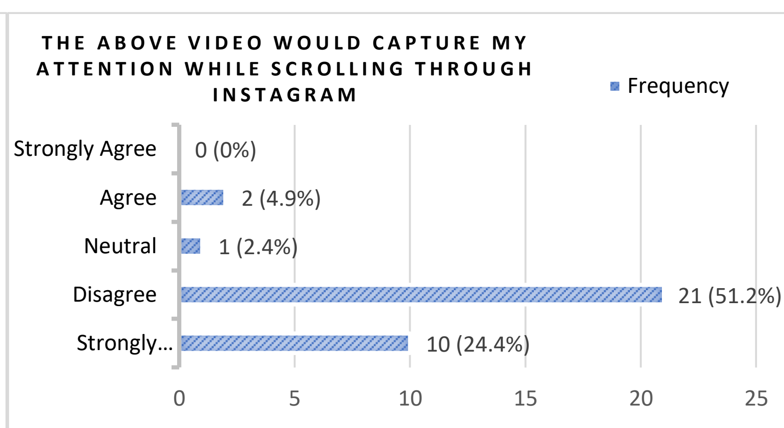


Figure 19: Overview of (Egyptian) participant's attentiveness to a Traditional Advertisement



6.4.1.1 Common Method Variance (CMV):

In order to insure bias is not an issue four approaches were utilized starting with CMV. Common method variance was conducted on the largest participating nationalities outside Kuwait to observe how they reacted to ironic advertisements. The mean scores of the nationalities were measured to check for common method variance. This approach is used to validate this study as being deemed suitable for the entirety of the middle east. Furthermore, in the case common method variance does exist it can lead to a potential threat to the validity of the research, hence to confirm validity of this research the variance between different nationalities must be below 50% (Fuller, et.al, 2016). Participants from Jordan, Saudi, and Egypt have a minor variance in terms of attentiviness to ironic advertisments at 13.4%, this result demonstartes that ironic ads are effective among different middle eastern countries although the study was conducted in Kuwait.

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Jordanians	1.171	39.033	39.033	.403	**13.442**	13.442
Saudis	1.052	35.081	74.114			
Egyptians	.777	25.886	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 10: Principal Axis Factoring.

6.4.1.2 Multivariate Analysis:

Further investigation was conducted between nationalities through a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to provide more credibility of this study. Multivariate analysis of variance is a statistical approach that is used to compare the means of multivariate samples (O'Brien et al., 1985). It is employed as a multivariate process when there are two or more dependent variables, and significance tests considering each dependent variable independently are frequently conducted afterward. In the case of this research MANOVA was employed to measure variance in scores regarding dependent variables (intention to explore, intention to engage) between (Jordanian, Saudi, and Egyptian) participants. This analysis was conducted through SPSS and results in table 11 demonstrate insignificant variance between the three nationalities in terms of both (intention to explore $p=0.638$, intention to engage $p=0.644$). This provides more strength to validate the framework used in this study deemed suitable for middle eastern consumers as a whole.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	**Dependent Variable**	**DF**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Nationality	Intention Explore	2	0.033	0.455	0.638	0.029
	Intention Engage	2	0.077	0.446	0.644	0.028

Table 11: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable	**Nationality**	**Mean**	**Std. Error**	**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
Intention Explore	Jordanian	4.2	0.086	4.025	4.375
	Saudis	4.306	0.072	4.158	4.453
	Egyptians	4.277	0.086	4.102	4.452
Intention Engage	Jordanian	4.316	0.131	4.049	4.583
	Saudis	4.19	0.111	3.964	4.416
	Egyptians	4.15	0.131	3.883	4.417

Table 12: Upper and Lower Bounds

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the above table the mean scores between the three nationalities range from (4.15 – 4.306), meaning there is only a 0.15 difference between the minimum and maximum for intention to explore and intention to engage. This small difference justifies the statistical insignificance found in table (11).

Prior to moving on to step 2 that is exploratory factor analysis, two more checks were performed on all the participating nationalities: (1) Collinearity Diagnostics (using the Variance Inflation Factor, also known as VIF) to make sure that there is no issue with the Common Method Variance, and (2) Skewness and Kurtosis coefficient analysis to confirm that our data is normal. VIF was measured for all the independent variables (ironic ads, traditional ads, celebrity chefs, food bloggers, social media influencers) and all values are <2 [i.e., ranges from 1.1–1.3 <2], according to the VIF results. When skewness and kurtosis are looked at, loadings fall between [<±2 and <±3]. As a result, our data is free of common method bias (Kock, 2015) and do not defy the normalcy assumption (Hair et al., 2017). After completing the collinearity diagnostics and test of normality, the next step was the exploratory factor analysis. Hence it can be concluded, that there is no variance between all the participating nationalities.

6.4.2 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) Stage:

Adequacy:

In order to check whether the observed variables load together as expected, are suitably connected, and are legitimate and dependable, an EFA employing Principal Component Analysis was carried out. After 6 iterations, the EFA produced a 10-factor model solution that accounted for 66.3% of the total variation.

Table 13: Total variance explained

Total Variance Explained						
Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1. Celebrity Chef	12.493	21.917	21.917	12.493	21.917	21.917
2. Social Media Influencer	4.641	8.142	30.059	4.641	8.142	30.059
3. Food Blogger	3.751	6.58	36.639	3.751	6.58	36.639
4. Attention to Irony	3.482	6.108	42.747	3.482	6.108	42.747
5. Attention to traditionalism	3.105	5.448	48.196	3.105	5.448	48.196
6. Intention to explore	2.779	4.876	53.071	2.779	4.876	53.071
7. Novel Foods	2.521	4.423	57.494	2.521	4.423	57.494
8. Intention to engage	1.967	3.452	60.946	1.967	3.452	60.946
9. Purchase through visit	1.692	2.969	63.915	1.692	2.969	63.915
10. Purchase through delivery	1.371	2.405	66.32	1.371	2.405	66.32
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Principal Component Analysis was applied to take into account all available variances, both common and unique. Varimax rotation was used to maximize the squared variance of the loadings, where loadings are the correlations between variables and factors. This rotation was employed as opposed to promax due to having no correlations between numerous constructs (etc. chef, blogger, ironic traditional). Using varimax rotation typically leads to low factor loadings for the remaining variables and high factor loadings for a smaller set of variables. Every remaining component has an eigenvalue greater than one (Stevens, 1996). The outcome simplifies the process of interpreting your data by emphasizing a limited set of significant variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy indicated a score of 0.898, which is very good according to Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) whilst Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at (<.001).

Table 14: Exploratory Factor Analysis Factor Loading Matrix

Components										
	Celebrity Chef	*Social Media Influencer*	*Food Blogger*	*Attention to Irony*	*Attention to Traditionalism*	*Intention to Explore*	*Novel Foods*	*Intention to Engage*	*Purchase through*	*Purchase through delivery*
TC1	0.806									
TC2	0.768									
TC3	0.777									
TC4	0.786									
TC5	0.792									
TC6	0.758									
TC7	0.794									
TC8	0.775									
TS1		0.735								
TS2		0.768								
TS3		0.739								
TS4		0.719								
TS5		0.749								
TS6		0.754								
TS7		0.737								
TS8		0.757								
TF1			0.739							
TF2			0.776							
TF3			0.754							
TF4			0.782							
TF5			0.744							
TF6			0.769							
TF7			0.77							
TF8			0.709							
AI1				0.83						
AI2				0.768						
AI3				0.762						
AT1					0.818					
AT2					0.871					

AT3					0.785					
IE1						0.755				
IE2						0.727				
IE3						0.763				
IE4						0.717				
IE5						0.752				
IE6						0.73				
IE7						0.767				
IE8						0.799				
NF1							0.844			
NF2							0.834			
NF3							0.818			
NF4							0.818			
ING1								0.724		
ING2								0.71		
ING3								0.723		
IPV1									0.755	
IPV2									0.813	
IPV3									0.821	
IPV4									0.81	
IPV5									0.749	
IPV6									0.775	
IPD1										0.781
IPD2										0.702
IPD3										0.762
IPD4										0.745
IPD5										0.822
IPD6										0.755

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.898
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	11187.194
	DF	1770
	Sig.	<.001

Reliability

All of the retrieved factors of Cronbach Alpha values were higher than 0.71, which is above the 0.70 suggested threshold (Hair et al., 2006). Furthermore, due to their strong correlation and interchangeability, all of the retrieved components were considered reflective. The factors were also deemed reliable and measure the constructs as intended, by the fact that all the factors' Composite Reliability (CR) exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.70 (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 15: Reliability Measures

Component	Number of items after EFA	Cronbach Alpha	Mean	(CR) Composite Reliability
1. Celebrity Chef	8	0.93	4.10	0.930
2. Social Media Influencer	8	0.902	3.80	0.903
3. Food Blogger	8	0.910	3.90	0.930
4. Attention to Ironic ads	3	0.811	4.26	0.911
5. Attention to traditional ads	3	0.783	2.40	0.790
6. Intention to explore	8	0.875	4.00	0.929
7. Novel Foods	4	0.879	3.50	0.910
8. Intention to engage	3	0.712	3.85	0.857
9. Purchase through visit	6	0.800	2.70	0.884
10. Purchase through delivery	6	0.85	4.00	0.900

6.4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

Convergent & Discriminant Validity

The components demonstrate strong convergent validity (AVE) as all of them were above the minimum requirement of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006). The factors also satisfy the requirements of Fronell & Larcker (1981) for discriminant validity since there are no correlations greater than the square root of the average variance extracted in the correlation matrix and/or cross loadings visible in the pattern matrix. Initially the construct (Intention to engage) was made out of six items that were employed from (Mirbagheri & Najmi, 2019), however after conducting the EFA and CFA those items were reduced from six to three. The items for (liking posts, commenting on posts, and brand following) as forms of engagement scored extremely low in terms of regression weight when compared to (saving posts, sharing, and inviting friends) hence they were removed and this coincides with the results of the qualitative study when it comes to brand engagement. The model validity measures and model fit are shown in the below tables.

Table 16: Model Validity Measures

	AVE	MSV	ASV	Traditional Ads	Celebrity Chef	Intention To Explore	Intention To Engage	Intention To Purchase (Delivery)	Novel Foods	Ironic Ads	Social Media Influencer	Food Blogger	Intention To Purchase (Visit)
Traditional Ads	0.589	0.212	0.075	**0.768**									
Celebrity Chef	0.621	0.245	0.136	0.460	**0.788**								
Intention To Explore	0.514	0.245	0.075	0.211	0.495	**0.717**							
Intention To Engage	0.599	0.034	0.007	0.111	-0.045	-0.024	**0.774**						
Intention To Purchase (Delivery)	0.600	0.228	0.107	0.387	0.478	0.468	-0.064	**0.775**					
Novel Foods	0.537	0.165	0.067	0.281	0.406	0.190	0.032	0.357	**0.733**				
Ironic Ads	0.560	0.145	0.068	0.201	0.381	0.267	0.074	0.326	0.309	**0.748**			
Social Media Influencer	0.561	0.017	0.006	0.064	0.124	0.020	0.058	-0.012	0.086	0.132	**0.749**		
Food Blogger	0.624	0.212	0.083	0.334	0.460	0.236	0.067	0.354	0.309	0.348	0.039	**0.790**	
Intention To Purchase (Visit)	0.561	0.034	0.011	0.139	-0.063	-0.046	0.184	-0.024	-0.021	0.116	-0.075	0.146	**0.749**

The table above includes findings for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) and Average Shared Squared Variance (ASV). The square root of the AVE is represented on the diagonal in bold, whilst the correlations of the constructs are represented off diagonal.

Calculated via Gaskin, (2016), "Stats Tools Package", Excel Tool.

Metric	Resulted Fit	Accepted Fit
Chi Square	1963.092	-
Degrees of freedom	1665	-
Probability Level	0.000	>.05 (however, this depends on sample size) taken from Hu and Bentler (1999)
CMIN/DF	1.179	A good ratio is <2.0 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980); (Carmines and McIver, 1981); (Kelloway, 1996)
CFI	0.971	>0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
TLI	0.968	For an excellent model it is necessary that the TLI value be higher than 0.95. (Brown, 2006)
RMSEA	0.023	<0.08 (Hair et al., 2006)
PCFI	0.920	PCFI value of 0.6 or higher indicate acceptable model fit. (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
GFI	0.868	>0.8 Acceptable, >0.9 Good (Hair et al., 2006)
AGFI	0.854	AGFI value of 0.80 or greater indicates an acceptable fit. (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
PCLOSE	1.000	>0.05 (Hu and Bentler, 1999) if PCLOSE is greater than 0,05, the model is considered to have a close fit.

Table 17: Model Fit Measures

The above table represents the model fit found in AMOS, along with the recommended guidelines for each metric. All the resulted fits were deemed suitable when compared with the accepted fit, therefore this presents valid justification of a good model fit. The next section presents the structural equation modeling, moderation and mediation analysis.

6.4.4 Structural Equation Modelling:

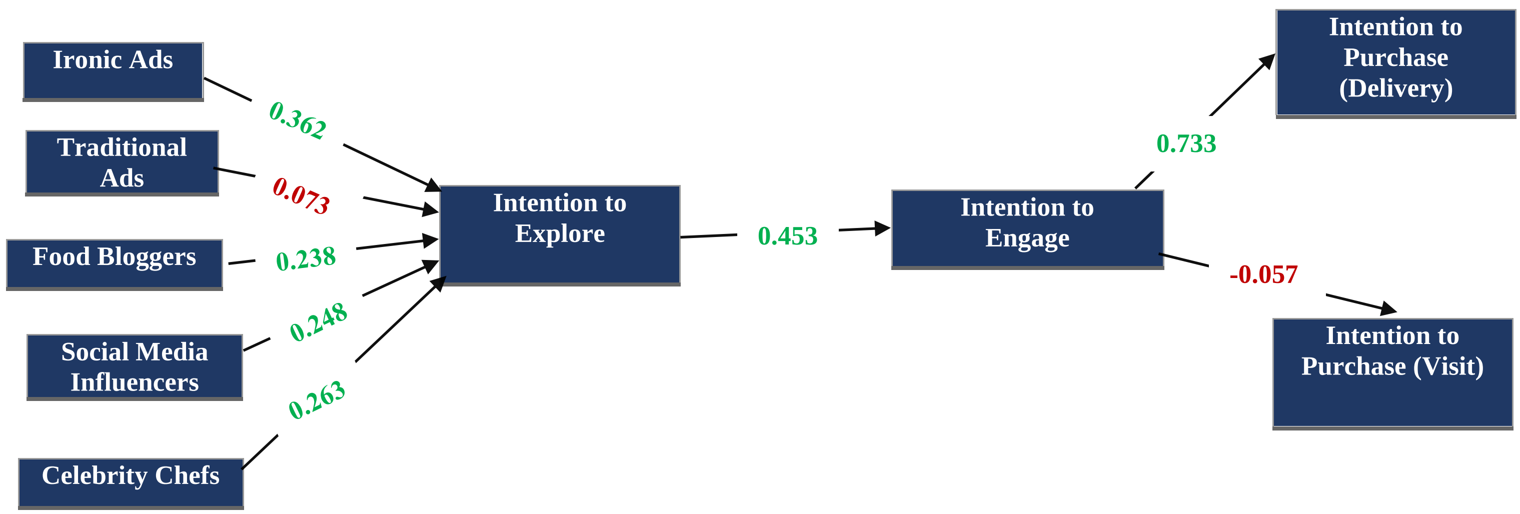


Figure 21: Relationships between constructs

RQ1: What is the role of bottom-up attention and schema incongruity theory within building a successful pre-launch campaign (H1a-H1b)?

This thesis addressed the area of attention through the literature review, experimental design, and analytical survey. Bottom-up attention is not arbitrarily decided, even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw their attention (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). In the case of this study the salient stimuli (Ironic Ads) was utilized to draw consumer attention in a cluttered Instagram environment. Ironic ads were derived from schema incongruity theory and schema incongruity is the condition in which a person's prior knowledge does not coincide with what they are currently recognizing or experiencing (Mandler 1982). When tested through experiment design, ironic ads were incongruent and captured the participants' attention whilst being exposed to traditional ads in parallel. For the survey design, irony was measured using items from the qualitative study after conducting a criterion validity where irony was the predictor variable and attention was the criterion variable. Survey results demonstrated that irony was a successful predictor of attention, furthermore the results of the survey design coincide with the experiment design, as the relationship between ironic ads and intention to explore is significant H1a (B=0.362, p=<0.001). Thus, H1a is supported while contrastingly H1b is not significant (B=0.073, p=0.251) as there is no relationship between traditional ads and the intention to explore. Traditional ads were also tested in both the experimental design and analytical survey, however in both they did not score well with the participants nor did they capture their attention. There is enough evidence to support the same outcomes in a real life setting. In order for upcoming businesses to succeed in an extremely competitive food & beverage sector the type of ads utilized must be incongruent to consumers' default schema. Otherwise, in an Instagram setting consumers will continue scrolling and this presents an opportunity cost for businesses as they are already paying for their ads to be sponsored.

RQ2: What is the role of opinion leaders (Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers) within building a successful pre-launch campaign (H2a-H2c)?

Opinion leaders have proven to be effective in increasing reach and raising awareness around new services and products (Wang, Ting, & Wu, 2013). There are several classifications of opinion leaders, in this study the impact of opinion leaders on the intention to explore was tested through (Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers). The analytical survey demonstrated that all three opinion leaders are significant and positively correlate with the intention to explore. Celebrity chefs had highest impact ($B=0.263$, $p=<0.001$), second was social media influencers ($B=0.238$, $p=<0.001$) , and third was food bloggers at ($B=0.248$, $p=<0.001$). These results coincide with the qualitative study as opinion leaders should possess at least one of the following characteristics: be recognized as an expert on a product or service; be an engaged member of an online community; participate frequently and significantly; or be regarded by other users as having good taste in regards to purchasing decisions. Celebrity chefs are the experts when compared to social media infleuncers or even food bloggers who have some sort of experience in food & beverage. Hence, middle eastern consumers prefer trustworthiness and expertise over fame and appeal when it comes to trigerring the intention to explore however, food bloggers and social media influencers should not go un-noticed. Both have proven to be significant, and this presents the need for further invesitigation on outcomes if all three are used in parallel by an upcoming business.

RQ3: What are the factors leading to a successful Pre-Launch marketing campaign and how do these factors interact (H1-H5)?

An Instagram user undergoes a series of steps when engaging with a new brand, however the first of any transaction will always be through capturing attention. Capturing consumer attention creates the opportunity for up-coming businesses in a pre-launch setting to capitalize through exploring, engaging, and purchasing. According to the results, the primary factor with the greatest impact on capturing attention is the use of ironic ads through video (B=0.362, p=<0.001). Ironic ads have proven to be effective in cluttered environments when compared to traditional ads (B=0.073, p=0.251). In parallel the use of opinion leaders is also an important factor that contributes to the success the success of a pre-launch marketing campaign as results demonstrate a significant relation between opinion leaders and the intention to explore. Upon exploring the brand's Instagram page, results demonstrate a significant relation with the consumers' intention to engage with the brand (B=0.453, p=<0.001). This indicates that consumers are more likely to engage with the brand through saving any post from brand's Instagram page or sharing to a friend or family member after exploring the brand's Instagram page, and more importantly this occurs after their attention was captured. The aforementioned forms of engagement go hand in hand with the users' intention to purchase.

Two types of purchase intentions were tested, the intention to purchase through delivery (online applications, websites) or through visiting the restaurant. As times are evolving, the demand for comfort continuous to increase especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers in the middle east and GCC in particular have a never-ending demand for convenience specially when it comes to food, as a result delivery platforms are currently at an all-time high in terms of growth (Ogundimu, 2023). This correlates with the results from this study as there is a significant relationship between the intention to explore and the intention to purchase through delivery (B=0.733, p=<0.001). Contrastingly the relationship between the intention to engage and intention to purchase through restaurant visit was not significant.

Moderation:

The below diagram demonstrates the impact of the moderator on several variables and how they interact. Moderation effects will be measured through AMOS, moreover a moderator might have an antagonistic, boosting, or buffering effect on the influence of the predictor on the chosen dependent variable (Babin et al., 2008). Only one moderator is projected to moderate the model which is (Novel Foods). Namely this study argues that novel foods can positively strengthen the relationship between (Intention to Explore) and (Intention to Engage).

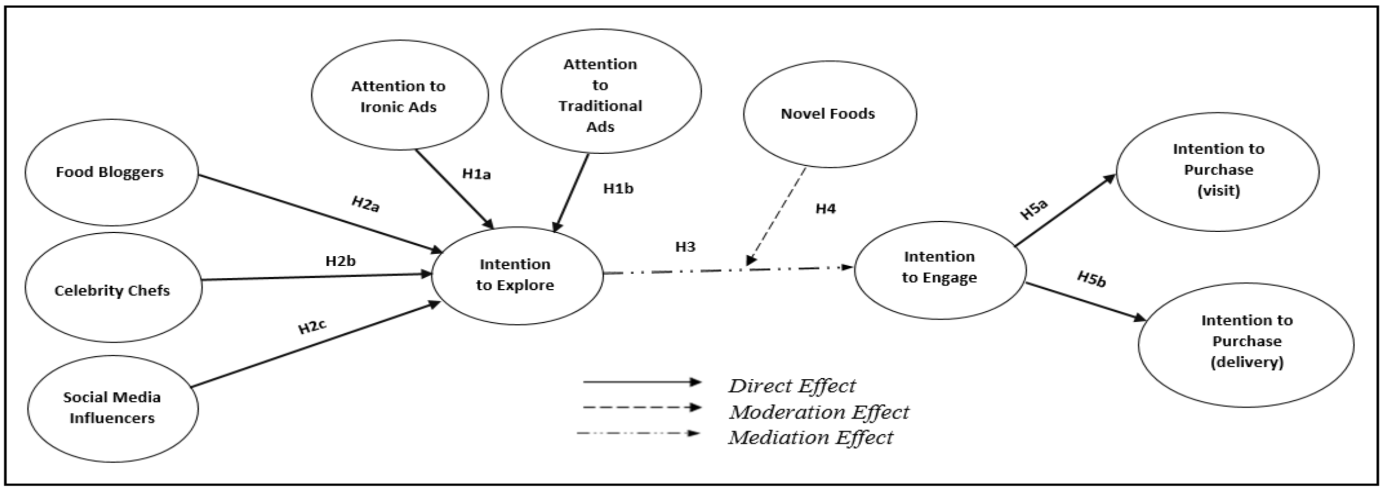


Figure 22: Pre Launch Communication Model

To test the moderation effects, the values for (Intention to Engage, Novel Foods) were centered (Collier, 2020) and their interaction was calculated using SPSS. After transforming all the constructs through averaging (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the updated data file from SPSS was uploaded to run the model on AMOS. After running the model through AMOS the below regression table (table 18) was extracted. Results indicate that there is no moderation as the interaction term is not significant at a p-value of 0.504, hence there is no relationship between the interaction factor and the dependent variable (Intention Engage). The construct Novel foods does not strengthen the relationship between the consumers' intention to explore and the intention to engage. This study assessed the moderating role of (Novel Foods) on the relationship between (Intention to Explore) and (Intention to Engage). The results revealed a non-significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables at (β = -0.047, t= 0.071, p-value= 0.504) therefore there was no need for further investigation in terms of probing.

Regression Weights: (Original model)			β	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value
IntentionExplore	<---	*AttentionTradtional*	0.055	0.048	1.148	0.251
IntentionExplore	<---	*AttentionIronic*	0.267	0.053	5.077	***
IntentionExplore	<---	*ChefsAsOP*	0.255	0.051	5.032	***
IntentionExplore	<---	*InfluencersAsOP*	0.221	0.055	4.024	***
IntentionExplore	<---	*BloggersAsOP*	0.194	0.059	3.289	***
IntentionEngage	<---	*IntentionExplore*	0.359	0.048	7.513	***
IntentionEngage	<---	*NovelFood*	-0.017	0.024	-0.711	0.937
IntentionEngage	<---	*InteractionNFxIEx*	-0.047	0.071	-0.669	0.504
PurchaseDelivery	<---	*IntentionEngage*	0.393	0.058	6.728	***
PurchaseVisit	<---	*IntentionEngage*	-0.027	0.061	-0.45	0.653

Possible reasons for no moderation:

The inclusion of novel food stems from the qualitative study. Whilst conducting the focus group interviews several groups disclosed their desire to experience new dishes/cuisines which is the reason behind integrating novel foods as a construct in the pre-launch communication model. The expectation was that, the researcher would accept H4 (Novel Foods moderates the relationship between intention to explore and the intention to engage) however as demonstrated in table 18 the relationship was not significant. As for reasons, the approach used to incorporate novel food in the survey was not the most effective as participants were asked questions about experiencing new types of food without any visual stimulation which might have led them to believe that the novel food in question was not appealing and may not even be delicious. Secondly, the placement of novel food as a construct was through a moderating relationship however it might have acted differently if used as an independent variable. Therefore, using novel food as a construct in the same context for future research may still be an effective tool. For more rigor and further assurance on moderation, novel foods was also tested as a moderator between celebrity chefs and the intention to explore. Similarly, the relationship between the intention to engage and the interaction of celebrity chefs with novel foods was not significant at p-value= 0.689. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no moderation within the framework.

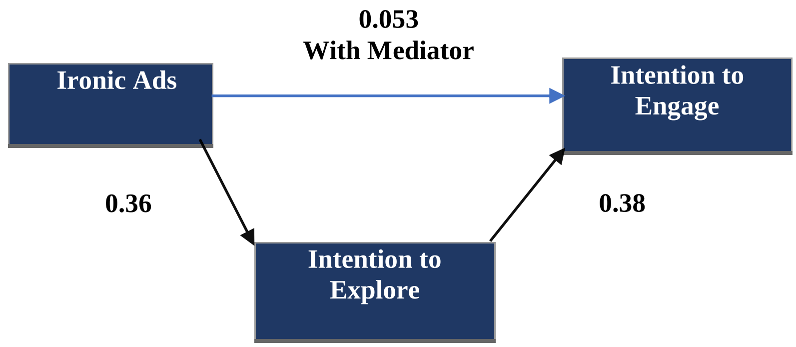
Mediation:

A mediation analysis was conducted in AMOS, in order to more accurately explain the causal effect for independent variables ironic ads, traditional ads, celebrity chefs, food bloggers, and social media influencers have on the outcome variable intention to engage, by focusing on the mediating variable (intention to explore) which has contributed towards making this causal chain possible. All the aforementioned independent variables were found to be a significant predictors of the proposed mediator (intention to explore) (p-value: .0000) except for traditional ads which had no relationship. The mediator (intention to explore) was also found to be a significant predictor of intention to engage. When linked with the intention to explore, ironic ads, celebrity chefs, food bloggers, and social media influencers had full mediation with (intention to explore), since the IV -> DV total effect is insignificant whilst the direct effect (IV -> M -> DV) is significant after the introduction of intention to explore as a mediator. The link between traditional ads, intention to explore and intention to engage had no relationship due to having a negative direct effect, and insignificant indirect and total effect. Since path 'a' and 'b' were significant for all mediators, mediation analysis was further conducted using the bootstrapping method with bias-corrected confidence estimates, obtaining a 95% confidence interval of indirect effects with 5000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The study found that H1a-H3 [Ironic Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage] had a significant indirect effect with full mediation [β = 0.136; p= 0.003, CI_{LL}=0.57, CI_{UL}= 0.307]. Contrastingly, H1b-H3 [Traditional Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage] was insignificant and had no relationship in terms of mediation at [β = 0.027; p = 0.143 CI_{LL}= -0.11, CI_{UL}= 0.093] respectively. The rest of the indirect effects all demonstrated significance and a full mediation relationship as expected H2b-H3 [Celebrity Chefs -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage] at [β = 0.091; p = 0.004; CI_{LL}=0.34, CI_{UL}=0.200], H2a-H3 [Food Bloggers -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage] at [β = 0.082; p = 0.011; CI_{LL}=0.14, CI_{UL}=0.210], H2c-H3 [Social Media Influencers -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage] at [β = 0.086; p = 0.002; CI_{LL}=0.25, CI_{UL}=0.215].

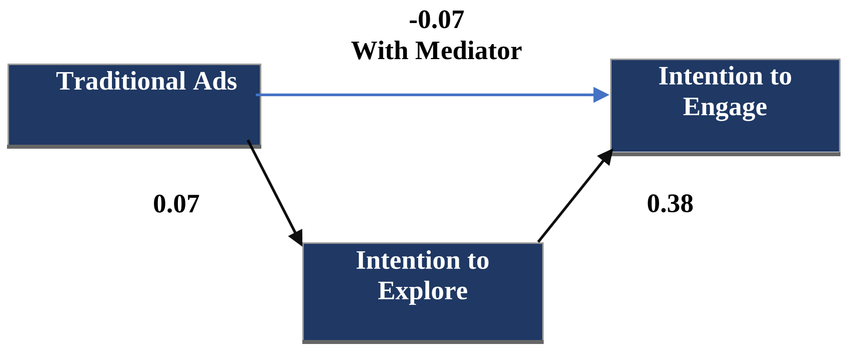
<u>Mediation: Ironic Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage</u>

Indirect effect of X on Y is .136 CI (0.57, 0.307)



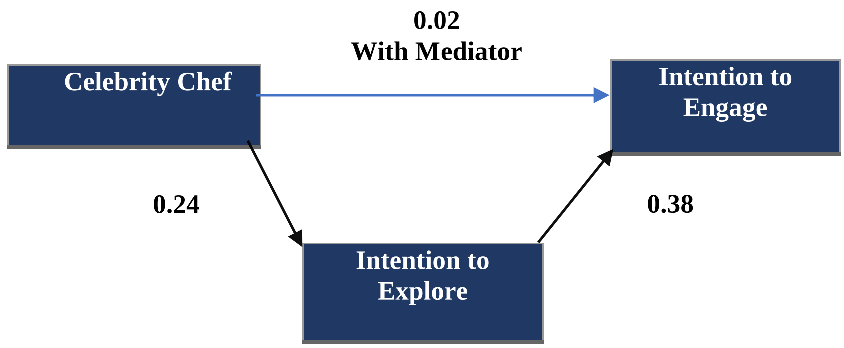
<u>Mediation: Traditional Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage</u>

Indirect effect of X on Y is .027 CI (-0.11, 0.093)



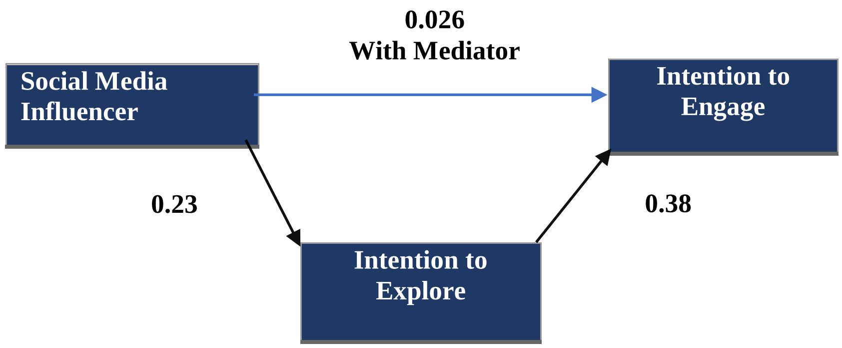
<u>Mediation: Celebrity Chef -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage</u>

Indirect effect of X on Y is .091 CI (0.34, 0.200)



<u>Mediation: Social Media Influencer -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage</u>

Indirect effect of X on Y is .086 CI (0.25, 0.215)



<u>Mediation: Food Blogger -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage</u>

Indirect effect of X on Y is .082 CI (0.14, 0.210)

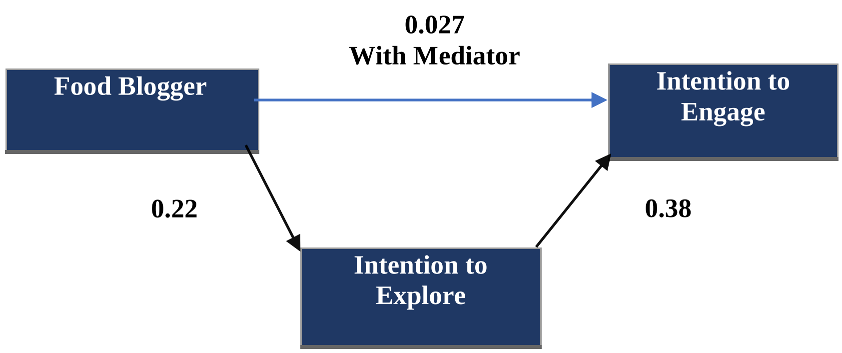


Table 19: Summary for mediation effects

Relationship	Direct Effect β	Direct Effect *p* -Value	Indirect Effect β	Indirect Effect *p* -Value	Bootstrapping indirect effects BCa 95% CI		Conclusion
					LL	**UL**	
Ironic Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage	0.053	**(P= 0.466)**	0.136	**(P= 0.003)**	= 0.57	= 0.307	Full Mediation Relationship
Traditional Ads -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage	-0.072	**(P= 0.246)**	0.027	**(P= 0.143)**	= -0.11	= 0.093	No Relationship
Celebrity Chefs -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage	0.020	**(P= 0.723)**	0.091	**(P= 0.004)**	= 0.34	= 0.200	Full Mediation Relationship
Food Bloggers -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage	0.027	**(P= 0.231)**	0.082	**(P= 0.011)**	= 0.14	= 0.210	Full Mediation Relationship
Social Media Influencers -> Intention to Explore -> Intention to Engage	0.026	**(P= 0.681)**	0.086	**(P= 0.002)**	= 0.25	= 0.215	Full Mediation Relationship

Table 20: Connection between phase1, phase2, and phase 3 in the methodology

Methodology	Summary	Connection
Focus Group Interviews	The interviews paved the way to understand pre-launch marketing, and eliminate constructs that were unnecessary such as the usage of WhatsApp advertising. Participants provided re-assurance that the conceptual framework is viable and provided introduced the construct of opinion leaders to the researcher. More importantly they all came together when supporting incongruent ads to capture attention and recommended the use of irony hence further investigation was needed.	The connection between focus group interviews and experiment design came through testing consumer attentiveness to ironic advertising. This was recommended by the vast majority of the focus group participants and that's where the need for experimental design came from.
Experiment Design	Attention was tested through experiment design by measuring the participants' attentiveness to ironic ads compared to traditional ads. The reason for using this approach is the need to build a similar setting of a common Instagram user. Participants found the approach relatable to their everyday Instagram experience as they were put in cluttered advertising environment.	After empirically validating that ironic ad capture consumer attention in a cluttered Instagram setting, the interaction between irony and rest of the constructs from the theoretical framework had to be measured through the analytical survey.
Survey Questionnaire	The survey measures all the constructs from the theoretical framework and how they interact through their selected items. Questions from the survey followed the same sequence from the theoretical framework starting from the participants' ad exposure leading to their intention to purchase. The survey followed a 5-point Likert scale system and had a total of 323 participants.	Focus group interviews and experiment design both contribute to the structure and validation of the questionnaire. The study initially had a slightly different theoretical framework that would have been less credible incase only a quantitative approach was followed. Therefore, all the approaches used in the methodology are connected.

Chapter 7. Overview and Conclusion:

The main theoretical contributions of this research study are covered in the first section of the next chapter. An outline of the research study's managerial implications, limitations and suggestions are shared along with key takes on how to take advantage of the findings for future research.

7.1 Research Overview:

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. *RQ1: What is the role of bottom-up attention and schema incongruity theory within the Pre-Launch marketing communication model (H1a-H1b)?*
2. *RQ2: What is the role of opinion formers (Celebrity Chefs, Food Bloggers, Social Media Influencers) within building a successful pre-launch campaign (H2a-H2c)?*
3. *RQ3: What are the factors leading to a successful Pre-Launch marketing campaign and how do these factors interact (H1-H5)?*

As highlighted in the earlier chapters, the aim of this study is to combine ironic ads along with opinion leaders as independent variables to build a successful pre-launch marketing framework. This allows small businesses in the food and beverage sector to build brand awareness through a holistic guiding framework that replicates the steps of a real life Instagram experience.

(RQ1) Bottom-up attention and schema incongruity theory (H1a-H1b):

The foundation of this research was built upon understanding what captures consumer attention in cluttered environments. As this research follows an abductive approach, this allowed new ideas to emerge as the researcher dived deeper in the literature. Bottom-up attention and schema incongruity theory are mutually inclusive as bottom-up attention is only activated when exposed to an incongruent stimuli and stimuli cannot be incongruent unless it activated bottom-up attention. After discovering this mutually inclusive relationship, and confirming through the literature that only incongruent stimuli can cut through advertising clutter, the next step was to find what type of stimuli must be used. Ironic ads were the answer after reviewing the gaps in its past applications, and after a rigorous testing procedure it was confirmed that ironic ads are in fact incongruent for middle eastern consumers and can capture consumer attention in cluttered environments when compared to traditional ads. This coincides with results from Kim & Kim (2018) as ironic ads were effective in an online setting, therefore there is no reason to believe that it would not be effective in future studies. Contrastingly traditional ads were rejected as a type of advertising that can influence the intention to explore.

(RQ2) The role of opinion formers (H2a-H2c):

Initially, opinion formers was a term that was discovered in a late stage of this research more specifically after the focus group interviews. The findings from the qualitative study not only encouraged the use of opinion leaders, but also introduced the types of leaders consumers follow on Instagram. People with massive followings on Instagram can be actors, athletes, artists, chefs, and the list goes on. Nonetheless, they all have one thing in common, and that is they are costly due to their large following. The participants from the qualitative study emphasized the trust they have for celebrity chefs when endorsing restaurants as it is part of their expertise, however this study employed social media influencers and food bloggers along with celebrity chefs in the quantitative survey to provide more rigor to the study. As expected celebrity chefs were had the greatest influence on the intention to explore, however social media influencers and food bloggers also had a positive impact, and that is largely due to selecting bloggers and influencers that have a focus on advertising their honest opinions about restaurant experiences.

(RQ3) Factors that lead to a successful Pre-Launch marketing campaign (H1-H5):

This research began in the notion of providing a holistic framework that would help new businesses flourish in cluttered environments. In the process of building this framework the researcher kept making changes according to advances in literature, and methodological findings. Gaining customers' attention allows nascent companies to benefit in a pre-launch context by exploring, interacting, and making purchases. Based on the findings, ironic video advertisements are the main element that has the biggest effect on drawing in viewers. Comparing ironic advertisements to traditional commercials, it has been found that the former work better in congested surroundings. Concurrently, the utilization of opinion leaders is a crucial element that advances the triumph of a pre-launch marketing campaign, since the findings indicate a noteworthy correlation between opinion leaders and the intention to explore. Results from exploring the brand's Instagram page show a strong correlation with customers' desire to interact with the brand. This suggests that after visiting a business's Instagram page and, more crucially, when their attention has been captivated, customers are more likely to interact with the brand by saving any post from the page or forwarding it to a friend or family member. The users' intention to buy is closely related to the previously described forms of engagement. However as previously mentioned, novel foods did not have a positive impact on the relationship between the intention to explore and the intention to engage. This matches the results from Olabi, Najm, Baghdadi, & Morton, (2009) as participants from their study demonstrated food nomophobia, and preferred traditional well known food over new types of food. The comparison between the intention to purchase through visit or via delivery apps was an interesting discovery. Delivery platforms are currently growing at an all-time high due to the Middle East's and the GCC's persistent demand for convenience, particularly when it comes to food (Ogundimu, 2023). The results empirically validate the preference of delivery platforms over in person visits and this provides more solution to small business owners on how to reach more potential customers.

7.2 Research Contribution and Novelty:

To address the mystery of what captures consumer attention in cluttered advertising environments, and how to build a successful pre-launch marketing campaign, this study takes on a triangulation approach using 5 semi-structured focus group interviews, experiment design with 60 participants, and 323 consumer survey responses. In doing so, this research provides a novel approach for upcoming businesses to flourish in a competitive market such as the middle eastern food and beverage sector. By taking on a consumer-centric approach, this enabled the researcher to decipher consumers’ attention and engagement with up-coming brands through a consolidated framework that can guide restaurant owners and marketers on how to tactically activate bottom-up attention for consumers which will then lure them to engage and purchase through Instagram. In parallel, with the activation of bottom up attention this research empirically validates the use of trusted opinion leaders to further strengthen the relationship with consumers’ intention to explore, engage, and purchase. There are three key ways this study has contributed towards existing theory and knowledge:

Gap 1: The lack of empirical validity in testing schema incongruity theory

After its inception in 1982, Mandler's schema incongruity theory and its impact on viewers' attention to advertisement has been the subject of numerous research. All in which validate its effectiveness in capturing attention, however there was always a different incongruent stimuli used for each study. Stimuli that worked for Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989), Goodstein (1993), Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpandé (2003) may not necessarily work in 2024. This study contributes to Mandler's theory in numerous ways. Firstly, this is the first study that addresses the key to effectively identifying an incongruent stimulus. Even more recent studies as Kim & Kim (2018), Gerrath & Biragla (2021) assume that the utilized stimulis' are incoungruent without regerous testing. This study goes the extra mile by defining the types of attention and empertically demonstrating how the key to identfying a incongruent stimulis' is the activation of bottom-up attention for consumers. Past studies have not contributed to bottom-up attention processing which is how schema incongruence is derived. Bottom-up attention is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention (Schreij, Owens, & Theeuwes, 2008). This required the researcher to follow an experimental design in order to establish whether or not irony can be considered incongruent. Unlike the vast majority of attention research that utilizes eye tracking, this study follows a novel experimental approach, that can be utilized by future practitioners that do not have the luxury nor funding of eye-tracking equipment. The experimental approach in testing irony be successful and this enabled the researcher to undoubtedly identify irony as an incongruent stimulus for middle eastern consumers in the food & beverage sector. Secondly, this is the first study that utilizes Mandler's (1982) theory in a modern pre-launch social media context, namely Instagram. Out of 44 million Instagram users from Arab countries (Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) a total of 28 million show interest in food & drinks on Instagram (Crowd Analyzer, 2022). This research provides a validated theoretical framework for new businesses that can effectively capture consumer attention in advertising clutter using schema incongruity theory.

Gap 2: Lack of empirical testing in the field of ironic advertisements

Stern (1990) carried out multidisciplinary research to pinpoint the traits of ironic advertising. She suggested that ironic advertising must have the following four qualities: (1) it sends a discrete message; (2) it has an intellectual message; (3) it aims to influence the consumer; and (4) the message has an unambiguous meaning. All in which were traits that were followed in the selection of the ironic ads utilized for this study. Although many advertisers have used ironic messages to draw the audience's attention, there has been little empirical research examining ironic messages in advertising (Kim & Kim, 2018). Furthermore, the majority of current research tests the effectiveness of ironic ads individually rather than collectively compared with other types of ads (Lagerwerf, 2007) (Illen & Nan, 2017). Consumers are exposed to different types of ads on a day to day basis, hence it would be academically rigorous to place ironic ads in a cluttered environment for consumers to judge. Kim and Kim's (2018) study used irony as a salient stimulus in the presented advertisement to capture attention; however, they have not mentioned the attention type allowing the participants to cognitively process the advertisements. The lack of stimulus presented to the participants is also worth mentioning. Four non ironic advertisements to only one ironic ad is not enough to declare saliency. According to Brown & Rothschild (1993) advertising clutter initiates at ten ads therefore this presents a gap in previous studies focused on ironic advertising. This study utilizes a novel experimental approach in testing ironic ads by placing the participants in a cluttered advertising environment using a total of ten ads where five were ironic and five were traditional. Firstly, the selected ironic ads were tested through a manipulation check to provide further reassurance that they meet the required criteria and the same applies for the traditional ads. Secondly the participants were presented with ten ads in which five are ironic and five are traditional, and to avoid bias the ads were shuffled similarly for all the participants. To further test the participants' memory they were presented with a short puzzle before proceeding to survey questions about the ads. This approach is the first of its kind as it allows the respondents to replicate a real life Instagram experience where they are exposed to numerous shuffled ads while scrolling and unlike other studies this approach rigorous in terms of comparison with other types of ads in a cluttered environment.

Gap 3: Lack of guidance on how to select a macro influencer that has the traits of an opinion leader for a pre-launch marketing campaign

The root concept of opinion leadership stems from Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet (1968) book on how the voter makes up their mind in a presidential election. Opinion leaders, according to their argument, gathered information from the media and then directly and verbally shared it with other members of the public. It was named the "two-step flow model" for this procedure. Today, interactions can be carried out both online and offline, so the role of opinion leaders has evolved substantially (Turcotte et al., 2015). Numerous studies have been conducted that focus on the favorable traits and characteristics of opinion leaders in an online context (Nunes et al. 2018 ; Jansson et al., 2017). The traits that were frequently researched as facilitating factors were (e.g. trustworthiness and expertise) (Kay, Mulcahy, & Parkinson, 2020). This study incorporated the same traits in testing the effectiveness of opinion leaders, however there are several contributions that have been made empirically and contextually. Previous studies have focused on opinion leaders as a construct, regardless of classifications. Opinion leaders may or may not be (actors, celebrity chefs, social media influencers, food bloggers etc...) meaning the relationship between big following and opinion leadership may be mutually exclusive at times and that is how this study contributes to existing literature. Upcoming SMEs in the food & beverage sector will likely use an opinion leader due to being quite inexpensive when compared to the expense of making banner ads, television ads, outdoor ads, etc., (Ahmad, 2018; Bevilacqua, 2018). Past research does demonstrate that (trustworthiness, and expertise) are the traits of an opinion leader however in the modern age of social media everyone with a large following also known as macro influencers share their opinions on products or services regardless of truthfulness and expertise (Li, et al., 2024). According to the qualitative findings the most commonly used marketers in the field of restaurants are celebrity chefs, social media influencers, and food bloggers. This study is the first of its kind to compare between the types of macro influencers to empirically whom is deemed most effective in the food and beverage sector. The majority of new businesses do not have the luxury of inviting and testing several types of macro influencers due to having high expenses. Hence it is critical for restaurant owners and marketing practitioners in the food and beverage sector to have empirically tested information on whom is most suitable for their pre-launch marketing campaign. Results demonstrated that celebrity chefs, were deemed the most effective opinion leader for a pre-launch marketing campaign. This study does agree with trustworthiness and expertise being deemed as the determining factor, however that is extremely vague as there are many who claim to have those traits on social media. This is the only study of its kind that empirically validates which type of macro influencer is an opinion leader that can actually influence consumer opinion in the field of food and beverage.

None the less, all three opinion leaders proved to have a positive relationship with consumers' intention to explore, and that is largely due to selecting opinion leaders with trustworthiness, however expertise was the determining factor on who came first (Celebrity Chefs) and had the highest positive relationship. In case there was no available or suitable celebrity chef, new businesses can employ food bloggers or social media influencers however there is an important criterion they must follow. Firstly, those bloggers or influencers should have a niche in their advertising history that aligns with upcoming business. For example, if the upcoming restaurant focuses on high end sandwiches, those advertising must have a history in working with sandwich shops or eating sandwiches in their day to day activities in order for consumers to trust and explore the advertised brand. The qualitative findings demonstrate that social media influencers that advertise different sectors of products and services continuously are deemed un-trustworthy and will negatively impact the advertised brand. Therefore, it is crucial to employ social media influencers or food bloggers that have a good history with your brand niche along with trustworthiness in sharing their opinions.

7.3 Managerial Implications:

Academic research has always emphasized the importance of marketing not just through advertising, but also through building an overall marketing campaign that covers the intended reach. Spending large portions of their budgets on advertising, new businesses are unaware of how to tackle advertising clutter, meanwhile it is empirically proven that middle eastern consumers enjoy buzz and hype over new launches whether that be through a new service, product, or restaurant. Pre-launch marketing campaigns provide information under which a new business is likely to encounter and expect when launching their business. Post launch marketing can portray the consumer opinion on social media after testing the product or service, however pre-launch is all about building buzz and excitement around what's coming. This study provides solutions for numerous managerial problems (Lack of marketing plans, a poor comprehension of the industry they operate in, and competition against well established companies) all three are pitfalls for small businesses in the middle east (Albalushi & Naqshbandi, 2022).

The Instagram bubble helped numerous businesses reach success in rapid time, however, as a result of frequent Instagram utilization, capturing consumer attention is a new challenge presented for current and upcoming businesses (Ha & McCan, 2008). Upcoming businesses in the middle east still have impression that using Instagram ads and social media influencers will guarantee sales and success however that is no longer the case. This brings us to the first problem mentioned in Albalushi & Naqshbandi, (2022) which is lack of marketing plans. Launching a new restaurant requires intense preparation, more importantly as the middle eastern market is heavily saturated it is critical to find a gap. That can be through a new cuisine, new theme, or new experience. A marketing plan that is designed around filling that gap is much more efficient than competing with existing well established brands. This does not mean going completely outside community norms, but rather finding a restaurant niche that isn't heavily saturated and building a unique marketing plan around it. Marketers may begin by exploring brands that gained rapid awareness at the pre-launch stage and understand what type of marketing approach they followed in order to build upon for their own project. Depending on their budget the approaches may vary, some businesses relay on a more hands on approach were a large investment is on ambient advertisements, and although that has proven to be effective, it is substantially more expensive than online advertising. The majority of new businesses that are not under the umbrella of a successful mother company and have limited funding therefore they should rely more on social media to build brand awareness by creating teaser ads or unique online invitations to the restaurant soft opening. Creativity, innovation, value creation, and resource utilization are all equally critical when launching a new restaurant with minimal resources. As a new business you must constantly find new ways to stand out and this is where the urge for a pre-launch campaign comes from because it does not only raise brand awareness at an early stage, yet it also provides entrepreneurs an idea of how sales will be based on brand engagement.

The second problem mentioned in Albalushi & Naqshbandi, (2022) is also tackled in this study that is poor market comprehension. Years of work about the middle eastern food & beverage sector is summarized in this study offering a solid understanding of the industry and how to approach consumers as a new business. Arab consumers consider the food & beverage sector as a hedonic sector to indulge and enjoy regardless of the cost. Hence, upon building a marketing strategy the ideology must be around providing an opportunity for consumers to experience unique elements of the brand. Middle eastern consumers care about packaging, taste, value, and recently convenience has made it it's way as a priority in that list. Consumers in the middle east and gulf countries in particular have a never ending demand for convenience specially when it comes to food, as a result fresh food delivery has changed in recent years, going from kitchens to dining rooms and even to cloud kitchens that serve food to those who live far away. This is core information when building your brand as delivery platforms offer business owners a bigger slice of the pie if they have strong market comprehension. This coincides with the results obtained from this study as the vast majority of participants preferred ordering their food rather than visiting the restaurant. This is substantial information for any up-coming business looking to invest not in marketing but also in their delivery operation.

The third problem managerial problem that new businesses face is the competition against well established companies. It is more likely for new businesses to work with less funding and a less margin for error than well established brands. New businesses are no strangers to challenges, numerous start-ups already fail within their first few years in the market (Escheberger, 2020). This is where the urge for a pre-launch marketing campaign stems from, because they can provide feedback for SMEs about the market that can help them make some changes before going the extra mile and opening (Marvel et al., 2020). This can save substantial amounts of money, and more importantly provide valid information about what to expect. As mentioned earlier, the core of all challenges is capturing consumer attention on Instagram. This is due, to competition from companies in the same sector, and the other stimuli that is generated from the user's following base. New Businesses, must explore different approaches in their advertising techniques and find the stimuli that works best with their market niche. More importantly, this research has a particular focus on marketing techniques, however marketing can only take a business so far if the product or service are not up to standard. Hence, before investing in any sort of marketing businesses must have high evaluation of their product and then build their marketing approach around that product or service.

Lastly, this cannot be stressed enough, starting a small business in any sector requires a set interpersonal skills. The most advanced well put framework cannot aid to success unless the owner, and staff all have resilience, honesty with themselves and with their customers, and most importantly the will to work extremely hard for small gains in order to eventually reach maximum gains. Success in business as anything else in life does not come over night, however when hard work is paired with preparation anything is possible.

7.4 Conclusion:

A rich culinary legacy and changing consumer demands have created the dynamic and thriving Middle East food service market. The region has seen tremendous growth in the food service business due to its diversified population and expanding middle class. Bold flavors and distinctive spices define traditional Middle Eastern cuisines, which coexists with the growing desire for cutting-edge, diverse dining experiences. Large cities like Dubai, Riyadh, and Doha have developed into culinary hotspots with an abundance of eateries ranging from hip cafes to fine dining restaurants. A booming delivery environment, contemporary cuisine chains, and historic restaurants all influence the Middle East food service market. Global trends have led to a noticeable shift in dining alternatives in recent years toward healthier and more sustainable options. The middle eastern market is currently estimated at $55.65 billion USD and is expected to reach an evaluation of $158.53 billion USD by 2034, this forecast translates to the need for modern marketing approaches to compliment the staggering expected growth.

As a developing researcher, finishing this study has been a very rewarding journey and enriching experience, as I have gained many skills. These include finding pertinent material and critically analyzing it in relation to a research problem or question; conducting, analyzing, and writing up qualitative research; and acquiring the technical know-how to perform an experiment design and intricate statistical analyses using IBM SPSS and AMOS to evaluate validity, reliability, and causal relationships. In addition to identifying and defining the theoretical advancements that this research has brought to light some of acquired skills required a very steep learning curve, but I know that practice makes perfect, and as I gain more experience as an academic in higher education, I will be able to refine my research techniques and expand on my repertory. As mentioned in the previous section, I honestly believe that this study will have a significant and long-lasting impact on a range of stakeholders as well as the context of the literature on pre-launch marketing.

If I were to carry out this research study again, I would have also made an effort to secure outside funding and partnered with organizations like well-established marketing agencies in Kuwait from the start, in order to benefit from their extensive network of contacts both inside and outside the food & beverage industry and variety of resources that scholars have access to because of their prior research. Interacting with industry representatives across different stretches of control and lines of command would have put me in an even better position to capture findings that marketers, business owners, and practitioners could easily implement, which might have allowed me to develop an even more focused model/framework and set of recommendations.

7.5 Limitations and future research directions:

For future research, it would be interesting to explore different types of ads that capture attention in cluttered environments. Ironic ads have proven to be effective, however there many other types of ads that may provide the same impact or even better. Furthermore, irony can be divided in into multiple synonyms, therefore the type and degree of irony in advertising can provide more in depth results for future practitioners. In addition, this study only highlights the perspective of Arab consumers, which opens the door for research on other ethnicities. While middle eastern consumers preview food as a hedonic product in which they indulge in it would very interesting explore other sides of the spectrum, and how ironic ads would influence consumers that view food as a utilitarian product. Furthermore, this research rejected novel foods as a moderator that can influence the relationship between the intention to engage and intention to explore. The results from the survey contrast with the results from the focus group interviews where new cuisines and new types of food were welcomed by Arab consumers. Perhaps future research can examine the construct of novel foods in a different perspective as phase 1 from methodology proves its effectiveness.

Due to time constraints the researcher was not able to compliment the current findings with a feasibility study about all the costs of running a successful pre-launch marketing campaign. Using ironic ads and opinion leaders have proven to be effective, however there are costs involved in creating the advertisements, finding the best value for money opinion leaders, and whether or not it is more practical to do in house marketing or relay on the services of a marketing agency. Forthcoming research can also explore the impact of the framework in the other industries.

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Appendix 1: BREO Approval (Focus Groups)

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

www.brunel.ac.uk

13 July 2021

LETTER OF CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 14/07/2021 AND 10/10/2021

Applicant (s): Mr Ahmed Ismail

Project Title: Understanding consumer following behavior on Instagram

Reference: 30830-LR-Jul/2021- 33334-2

Dear Mr Ahmed Ismail

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- **A18.1 – Consent - Your consent form still contains a reference to an electronic survey - you have not mentioned this in your methodology, so you should proof-read the form. As previously requested refer to the "Consent Form Guidance" and "Consent Form Template" available in 'Templates' under the Help link at the top of the BREO form.**
- **You are not required to resubmit your BREO form after making the changes listed above. Please make the changes and proceed with your research.**
- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**
- **In addition to the above, please ensure that you monitor and adhere to all up-to-date local and national Government health advice for the duration of your project.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Professor David Gallear

Appendix 2: BREO Approval (Attention Experiment)

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

www.brunel.ac.uk

23 August 2023

LETTER OF APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 23/08/2023 AND 20/10/2023

Applicant (s): Mr Ahmed Ismail

Project Title: Attention to Ads Experiment

Reference: 44526-LR-Aug/2023- 46952-2

Dear Mr Ahmed Ismail

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- Risk assessment - Please ensure that any refreshments provided to participants are provided by a reputable supplier.
- A14.1 - To note - Any activity to recruit participants via social media must comply with the terms and conditions of the social media sites that you wish to use.
- Advert - suggestion - add your inclusion criteria.
- A18 - PIS:

  - What if something goes wrong? - Apologies for the confusion - Please explain that questions about the research should be directed to you, the researcher. Complaints on the other hand should be directed to the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee: cbass-ethics@brunel.ac.uk (as you previously stated).

  - Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

    - Please let participants know that with their permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research and that they can can indicate whether or not they give permission for this by way of the consent form.

    - In the PIS you say data 'will be used only for future academic publications (with your permission) in the next ten years'. You do not ask permission for this in your consent form. Please either reword your PIS or add an appropriate statement to your consent form.

  - Please reword the contact section so that it is clear that any questions about the study should be directed to you or your supervisor. It is fine to leave the contact for complaint information as currently provided, but the research office will not be able to answer general queries about your study.

- Consent form:

  - Please remove any red text that is intended as guidance to you (eg '[Where relevant]').

  - Please proofread and appropriately amend the following statement 'Choosing not to participate or withdrawing will not affect your by any means'.

- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**
- **Please ensure that you monitor and adhere to all up-to-date local and national Government health advice for the duration of your project.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor

Appendix 3: BREO Approval (Survey Design)

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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7 February 2024

LETTER OF APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 07/02/2024 AND 31/03/2024

Applicant (s): Mr Ahmed Ismail

Project Title: Attention to Ads Survey

Reference: 47135-LR-Jan/2024- 49722-2

Dear Mr Ahmed Ismail

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to any conditions that may appear above.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- If your project has been approved to run for a duration longer than 12 months, you will be required to submit an annual progress report to the Research Ethics Committee. You will be contacted about submission of this report before it becomes due.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Nigar Hashimzade

Professor Nigar Hashimzade

Chair of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

Appendix 4: Constructs Table

Concept/Latent Variable	**Conceptualization & Operationalization**	**Measurement Items**	**Source**
Ironic ads	Irony in advertising is "any remark that conveys a meaning distinct from the one it pretends to deliver". **Operationalization:** Irony was used as the predictor variable, and attention was used as the criterion variable.	**Item 1:** The above video would capture my attention while scrolling through Instagram. **Item 2:** If the above video captured my attention, I would explore the brand's Instagram page to find out more? **Item 3:** I'm attracted to attend restaurant ads that present something other than just food in their advertisements.	Qualitative Study
Opinion Leaders	Occurs when consumers seek verbal influence from distinct people known as opinion leaders. **Operationalization**: Trustworthiness, Expertise The same constructs were used for all three types of opinion leaders: • Celebrity Chef • Social Media Influencer • Food Blogger	**(Trustworthiness) Item 1:** I consider the advice of this celebrity endorser undependable – dependable. **(Trustworthiness) Item 2:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorsers dishonest –honest. **(Trustworthiness) Item 3:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorsers unreliable – reliable **(Trustworthiness) Item 4:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorsers untrustworthy – trustworthy. **(Expertise) Item 5:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorser as not an expert – expert. **(Expertise) Item 6:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorser as inexperienced – experienced. **(Expertise) Item 7:** I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorser as unknowledgeable – knowledgeable.	(Ohanian, 1991)

		(Expertise) Item 8: I consider the restaurant advice of this celebrity endorser as unqualified – qualified.	
Attention	Bottom-up attention is a mental activity that is not arbitrarily decided. Even when a participant had no intention of paying attention, salient stimuli will draw attention. **Operationalization:** Ad recall & Ad recognition **Experiment design:** The subjects will be informed that they are participating in an experiment concerned with "people's responses to Instagram advertisements". They will be shown ten advertisements that feature a variety of products from the food and beverage. Five ads will be congruent to their usual schema with no irony while five are ironic.	**Recognition of ad elements:** a randomized list of photos from different restaurant brands including elements from the ten associated target advertisements are shown to the subjects The subjects are then asked to try to pick out food and characters that featured in the target advertisements. **Cued recall of brand names:** An element from the target advertisements were listed and the subjects were asked to try to recall the corresponding brand name.	(Norris & Coleman, 1992)
Intention to explore	Intention to explore is defined as the consumers' willingness to discover more information about the topic of interest. **Operationalization:** Click intention	**Item 1**: I will be considering to click on the advertisement that I find attractive. **Item 2:** I will be intending to click on the advertisement that I find attractive. **Item 3:** I will very possibly click on the advertisement that I find attractive. **Item 4:** I will be inclined to click on the advertisement that I find attractive. **Item5:** If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be considering to explore that page?	(Wu et al., 2018)

		Item 6: If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be considering to explore that page? **Item 7:** If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will very possibly explore that page? **Item 8:** If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be inclined explore that page?	
Novel Foods	New food products or cuisines that are unfamiliar to the common consumer. **Operationalization:** New foods	**Item 1:** I would try restaurants that serve new foods very willingly. **Item 2:** Restaurants can serve new foods that are very tasty. **Item 3:** I am very interested in the idea of trying restaurants that serve new foods. **Item 4:** I have no problem in trying new foods in restaurants because I'm very familiar to trying new things.	(Torri, Tuccilo, Bonelli, Piriano, & Leone, 2020)
Intention to Engage	A customer's level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions. **Operationalization:** Saving brand post / following the brand / Sharing with friends	**Item 1**: I would like the posts related to a restaurant I find attractive. **Item 2**: I would comment on the posts related to a restaurant I find attractive **Item 3**: I would save the posts related to a restaurant I find attractive. **Item 4:** I would follow a restaurant brand on Instagram that I find attractive. **Item 5**: I would share the posts related to a new restaurant brand I like. **Item 6**: I would ask my friends to participate with me in trying a new restaurant I found on Instagram.	(Mirbagheri & Najmi, 2019)

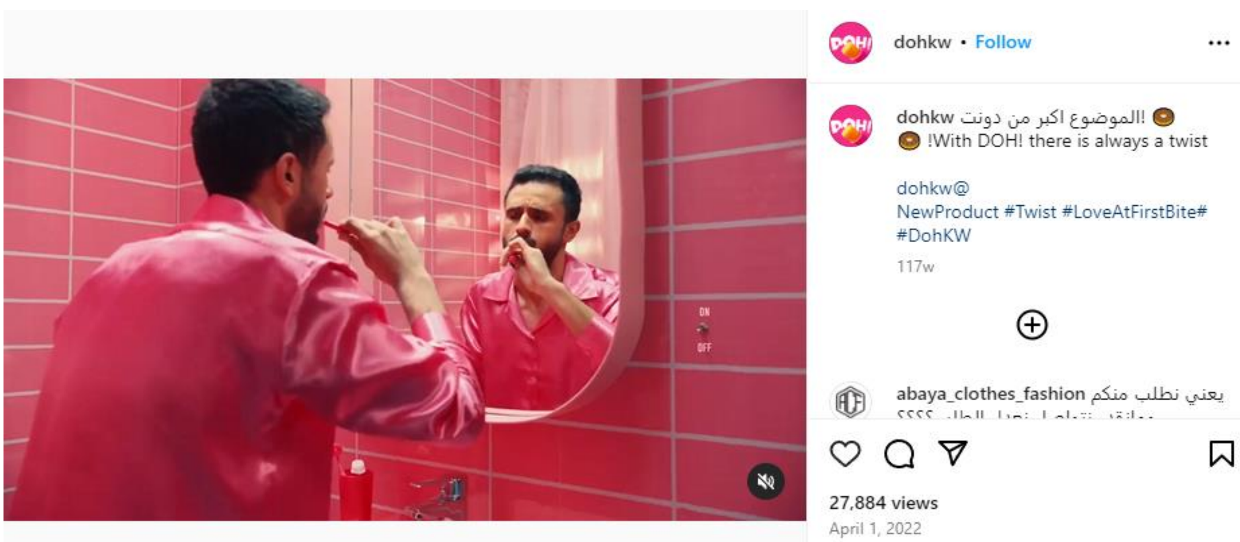
Intention to Purchase	Purchase intention has been measured in several ways, such as measuring the expressed intention to purchase using a scale composed of several positively worded statements of environmentally responsible behaviors Operationalization: Visit, delivery	**Item 1 (Visit):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I become interested in making a visit to the restaurant? **Item 2 (Visit):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I am willing to try the food being advertised by visiting the restaurant? **Item 3 (Visit):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I would consider visiting the restaurant to try the advertised food? **Item 4 (Visit):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I will probably visit the restaurant to try their food? **Item 5 (Visit):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, it is very likely that I will visit the restaurant to try the food?	**Item 1 (Delivery):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I become interested in making an order through delivery? **Item 2 (Delivery):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I am willing to try the food being advertised by ordering through delivery? **Item 3 (Delivery):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I would consider ordering the food through delivery? **Item 4 (Delivery):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I will probably order the food through delivery?	(Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019)

		Item 6 (Visit): After visiting a restaurant I liked, I would recommend the restaurant to friends and family?	**Item 5 (Delivery):** After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, it is very likely that I order from the restaurant through delivery? **Item 6 (Delivery):** After ordering through delivery from a restaurant I liked, I would recommend the restaurant to friends and family?	
<u>Traditional Ads</u>	Advertisements that are congruent to consumer perceptions and experiences in order to be more relevant, more comprehensible, and more appealing. **Operationalization:** Traditionalism was used as the predictor variable, and attention was used as the criterion variable.	**Item 1:** The above video would capture my attention while scrolling through Instagram. **Item 2:** If the above video captured my attention, I would explore the brand's Instagram page to find out more? **Item 3:** I'm attracted to attend restaurant ads that present something other than just food in their advertisements.		Qualitative Study

Appendix 5: Ads used for the study

Ironic Ad 1 Experiment Design:

This ad is for a restaurant named Cari, and the irony stems from the lady in the picture, as she is talking about items in their menu in a new channel style whilst wearing traditional clothing which is unusual for a restaurant ad.

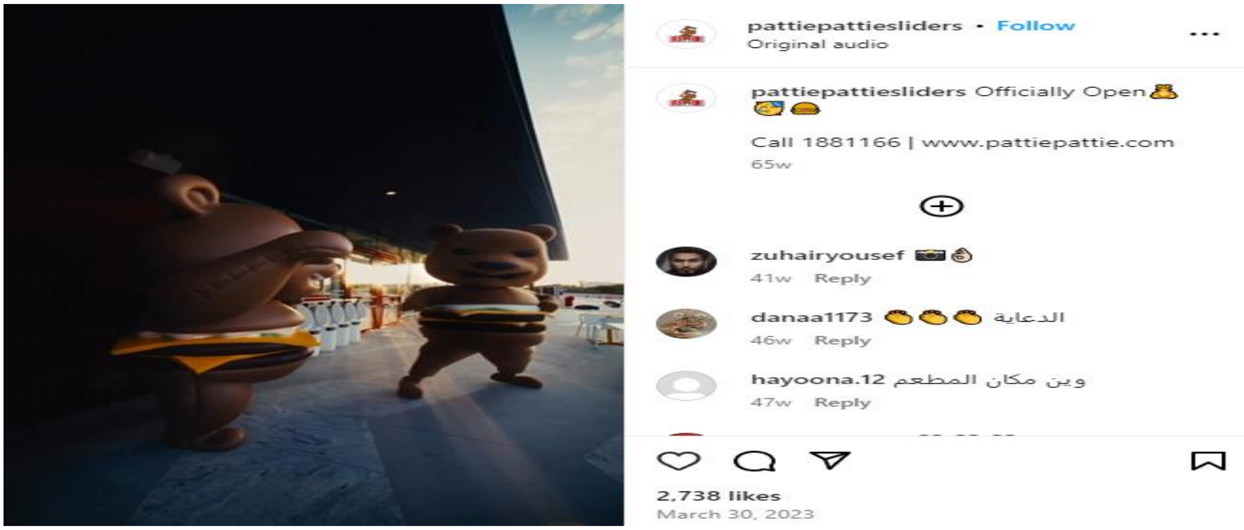


Ironic Ad 2 Experiment Design:

This ad is for a confectionery called DoH, this ad begins with a man brushing his teeth while being surrounded by the brand colors as he then proceeds to order dessert. Accompanied with vibrant music this is ironic in many aspects.

Ironic Ad 3 Experiment Design:

Yelo Pizza is currently a well-known pizza shop in Kuwait. They used the above advertisement as part of their pre-launch campaign which is strange for a pizza shop. Their brand icon is the above duck and they used a Morgan Freeman voiceover which was completely out of the box for middle eastern users.



Ironic Ad 4 Experiment Design:

Pattie is a heavily marketed burger shop in Kuwait. Similar to Yelo Pizza they also used their brand icon part of their pre-launch campaign whilst the icon was dancing in a very strange way. The bear had a burger within the torso area which demonstrated that it was a burger shop.

Ironic Ad 5 Experiment Design:

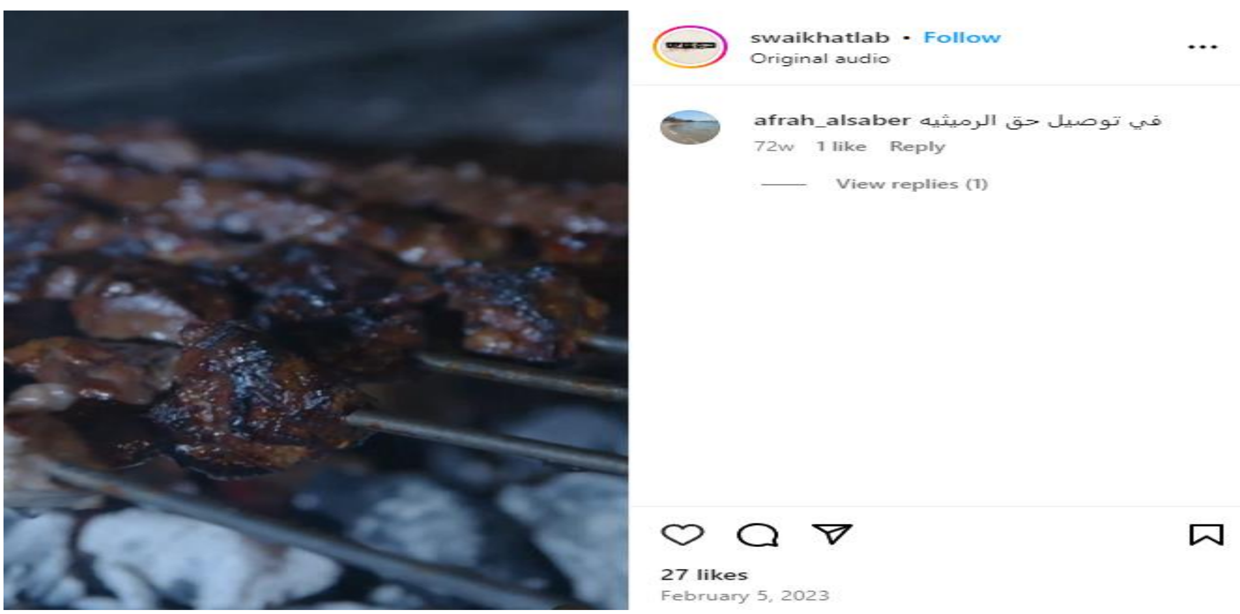
Eatfatcap is a burgers shop, that begins their ad in a cowboy like theme which represents the theme of their restaurant. The ad is shot in a stable which later on proceeds to demonstrate the type of food they offer.

Traditional Ad 1 Experiment Design:

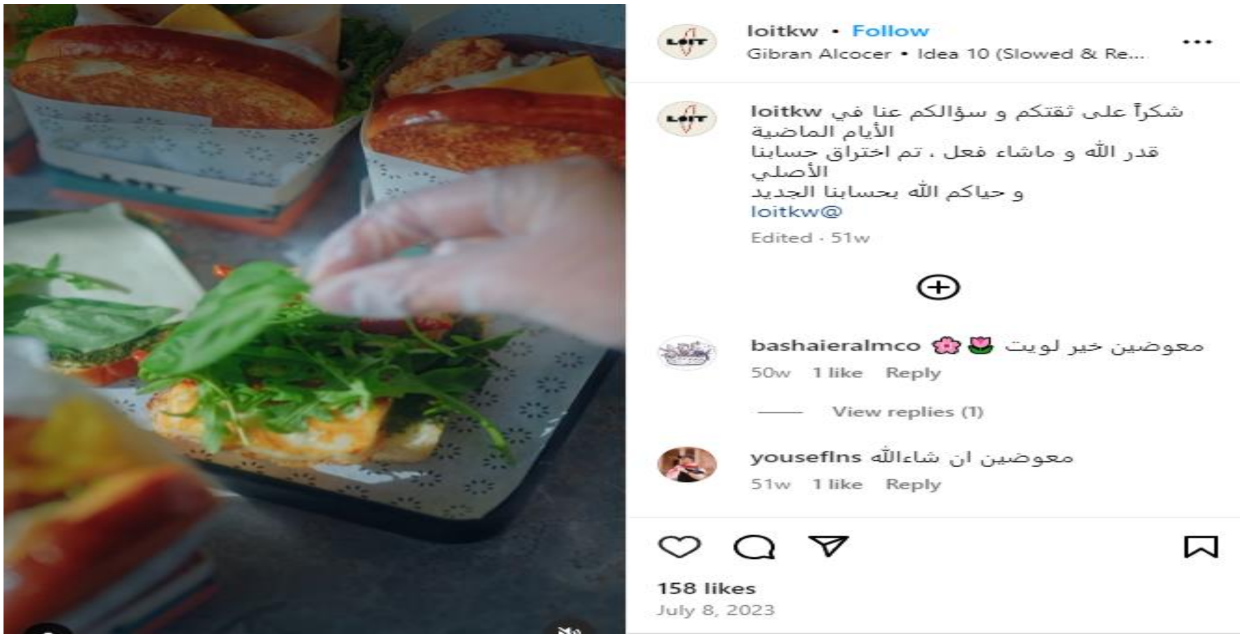
Bitburger is a burger shop in Kuwait. The ad demonstrates the burgers they offer with close up shots.

Traditional Ad 2 Experiment Design:

Koala is sandwich shop that offers a variety of sandwiches. The ad shows how the chef makes the sandwiches with a close up shot.



Traditional Ad 3 Experiment Design:
Swaikhat is a restaurant known for all types of grills. The ad demonstrates how lamb chops are grilled using charcoal.



Traditional Ad 4 Experiment Design:

Loit is a restaurant known for offering coffee and sandwiches, the ad demonstrated the different products they offer with calm background music.

Traditional Ad 5 Experiment Design:

Smokery is a barbecue oriented restaurant that is well known for offering smoked meat. The ad demonstrated the methods used to cook their meat in close up shots.

Ironic Ad Survey Design:

This advertisement employs a celebrity musician, using Heinz ketchup in a high end restaurant, which is rather unexpected as ad begins by demonstrating its ambience and food then takes a strange turn of events.

Appendix 6: Survey Questions

Hello dear participant, thank you for participating in this survey and lending me some of your valuable time (10-15min).

My name is Ahmed Ismail and I'm a PhD researcher at Brunel University London, currently undertaking a study on attention to ads in cluttered environments.

The objective of this survey is to understand how you would react to advertisements that captured your attention through a series of questions. The results of this survey will be used to gain a better understanding of how upcoming restaurants should market their pre-launch campaign on Instagram.

Please note that you must be at least 21 years old, have an active Instagram account, and have an Arab nationality.

This study has been approved by the Brunel University Ethics Committee and I would like to reassure you that your feedback will remain anonymous, confidential, will be stored securely and shall not be used to any other purpose than this study.

Brunel University London

Pre-Screening Questions

Before we get to the main questions please let me know a little bit about yourself :)

	Attention | Ironic	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AI1	The above video would capture my attention while scrolling through Instagram. (Show Ironic ad)					
AI2	After watching video ad 1 I would explore the brand's Instagram page to find out more?					
AI3	I'm attracted to restaurant ads that present something other than just food in their advertisements.					
	Attention | Traditional					
AT1	The above video would capture my attention while scrolling through Instagram. (Show Traditional ad)					
AT2	After watching video ad 2 I would explore the brand's Instagram page to find out more?					
AT3	I'm attracted to restaurant ads that only present food in their advertisements					
	Trustworthiness & Expertise| Celebrity Chef					
TC1	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this celebrity chef dependable					
TC2	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this celebrity chef honest					
TC3	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this celebrity chef reliable					
TC4	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this celebrity chef trustworthy					
TC5	I consider this celebrity chef as an expert in providing restaurant recommendations					
TC6	I consider this celebrity chef experienced in providing restaurant recommendations					
TC7	I consider this celebrity chef knowledgeable in providing restaurant recommendations					
TC8	I consider this celebrity chef qualified in providing restaurant recommendations					
	Trustworthiness & Expertise | Social Media Influencer					
TS1	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this social media influencer dependable					
TS2	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this social media influencer honest					
TS3	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this social media influencer reliable					
TS4	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this social media influencer trustworthy					
TS5	I consider this social media influencer as an expert in providing restaurant recommendations					
TS6	I consider this social media influencer experienced in providing restaurant recommendations					

TS7	I consider this social media influencer knowledgeable in providing restaurant recommendations					
TS8	I consider this social media influencer qualified in providing restaurant recommendations					
	Trustworthiness & Expertise | Food Blogger					
TF1	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this food blogger influencer dependable					
TF2	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this food blogger influencer honest					
TF3	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this food blogger influencer reliable					
TF4	I consider the restaurant recommendations of this food blogger influencer trustworthy					
TF5	I consider this food blogger as an expert in providing restaurant recommendations					
TF6	I consider this food blogger experienced in providing restaurant recommendations					
TF7	I consider this food blogger knowledgeable in providing restaurant recommendations					
TF8	I consider this food blogger qualified in providing restaurant recommendations					
	Intention to Explore (Ads & Opinion Leaders)					
IE1	I will consider exploring an Instagram page that posts advertisements that are similar to video ad 1?					
IE2	I will be intending to explore an Instagram page that posts advertisements similar to video ad 1?					
IE3	I will very possibly explore an Instagram page that posts advertisements similar to video ad 1?					
IE4	I will be inclined to explore an Instagram page that posts advertisements that are similar to video ad 1?					
IE5	If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be considering to explore that page?					
IE6	If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be intending to explore that page?					
IE7	If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will very possibly explore that page?					
IE8	If the selected opinion leader advertised a restaurant page on Instagram, I will be inclined explore that page?					
	Novel Foods					
NF1	I would try restaurants that serve new foods very willingly					
NF2	I am very interested in the idea of trying restaurants that serve new dishes					

NF3	I deliberately search for restaurants that serve new dishes					
NF4	I believe that experiencing restaurants that serve new foods can give a pleasant sensation in the mouth					
	Intention to Engage					
ING 1	I would save the posts from the restaurant's Instagram page so that I can get back to them later					
ING 2	I would share the posts with friends or family related to the restaurant's Instagram page					
ING 3	I would ask my friends to participate with me in trying the new restaurant I found on Instagram					
	Intention to Purchase | Visit					
IPV 1	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I become interested in making a visit to the restaurant ?					
IPV 2	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I am willing to try the food being advertised by visiting the restaurant ?					
IPV 3	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I would consider visiting the restaurant to try the advertised food?					
IPV 4	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I will probably visit the restaurant to try their food?					
IPV 5	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, it is very likely that I will visit the restaurant to try the food?					
IPV 6	After visiting a restaurant I liked, I would recommend the restaurant to friends and family?					
	Intention to Purchase | Delivery					
IPD 1	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I become interested in making an order through delivery?					
IPD 2	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I am willing to try the food being advertised by ordering through delivery?					
IPD 3	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I would consider ordering the food through delivery?					
IPD 4	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, I will probably order the food through delivery?					
IPD 5	After engaging with a restaurant brand through following or sharing, it is very likely that I order from the restaurant through delivery?					
IPD 6	After ordering through delivery from a restaurant I liked, I would recommend the restaurant to friends and family?					

Appendix 7: Final CFA Model