Demystifying fake news in the hospitality industry: A systematic literature review, framework, and an agenda for future research

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A B S T R A C T

Fake news is an all-pervasive phenomenon that has transcended social and political boundaries and infiltrated the hospitality industry. While its growing prominence has piqued the interest of scholars, fake news literature in the hospitality industry is still in an embryonic stage and progressing without a strong theoretical foundation. The fragmented nature of research leaves a lot to be desired and presents an opportune moment to organize the extant literature to chart the course for future research. We respond to this call by conducting a systematic literature review of 51 articles discussing fake news in the hospitality industry and provide a comprehensive synthesis of the extant knowledge. In doing so, we identify a set of thematic trends, highlight gaps in the literature and develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that encapsulates the phenomenon in its entirety. Furthermore, we put forth a series of theme-based research avenues to inspire future research.

1. Introduction

Fake news refers to a type of falsehood which could be created and disseminated with the purpose ranging from misleading the audience to making money to advancing an ideological position (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2020). While the phenomenon is not new in itself, the present digital landscape has made it much easier to create and distribute fake news online (Domenico et al., 2021). The potential ramifications of fake news could be severe for businesses and consumers alike (Berthon and Pitt, 2018) and has led to growing concerns amongst academic scholars and practitioners (Domenico et al., 2021).

Fake news has marred businesses across sectors globally. For example, concerns have been voiced in several nations, including the USA (Miller, 2020), U.K (Satariano and Tsang, 2019), India (Bansal, 2019), Brazil (Palau, 2021), and others, about the impact of fake news on the electoral process. In a similar vein, the COVID-19 global pandemic has been a hotbed of fake news, with the World Health Organization (WHO) referring to it as an infodemic (WHO, 2020) while such health-related disinformation has been connected to people's reluctance to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which may result in ill-informed health decisions (Pierri et al., 2022). Likewise, the Ukraine conflict has also been a victim of fake news (e.g., Chao-Fong, 2022; Spring, 2022), while fake news perpetrators have also targeted celebrities to sell beauty products (Weisbaum, 2019). Although this

discussion highlights the cross-sectoral ramifications of fake news, the phenomenon has the ability to wield equal power over the hospitality industry as well (Rivera, 2020).

A classic example of fake news in the hospitality context is the "Pizzagate" conspiracy theory which went viral during the 2016 presidential elections in the United States, impacting several restaurants in the country (Wendling, 2016). The Starbucks tweets related to "Dreamer Day" is yet another example of fake news, which led to widespread confusion till Starbucks confirmed it as a hoax (Taylor, 2017). In other cases, the administration of the Indonesian island of Bali accused its tourism rivals of spreading false information about volcanic activity in the region (WARC, 2018) while a recent rumor that employees in specific restaurants in Richmond, British Columbia, were infected with COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the local restaurant scene, prompting restaurant owner groups to issue advisories to dispel the allegations (Shen, 2022). Although these incidences of fake news continue to plague the hospitality industry, causing harm to businesses, the phenomenon remains largely underexplored in the hospitality industry (Rivera, 2020).

Information is critical in the hospitality sector, which is reliant on the information produced, transmitted, and consumed on a daily basis by individuals globally (Chiang, 2020; Moraru, 2017). The digital landscape with social media platforms, collaborative tools for planning trips and so on empowers travelers to partake in key functions such as

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marketing, while the information generated by travelers on social media has a substantial impact on the decision making processes and behavior of travelers (Sigala et al., 2012). User-generated content is widely recognized as an effective and considerable source of information for travelers, scholars, and hospitality managers (Kumar et al., 2021b; Lu and Stepchenkova, 2015; Saheb et al., 2021). In this context, the influence of electronic word of mouth assumes immense importance in the hospitality industry, wherein intangibles are difficult to evaluate prior to consumption thereby prompting reliance on product reviews (Serra Cantallops and Salvi, 2014; Xiang et al., 2015). Moreover, hospitality consumers are known to spend considerable time acquiring information about products prior to purchase in order to limit risk and weigh in on alternatives (Gursoy, 2019). These online channels are being increasingly affected by fake news (Ng et al., 2021) and hence, fake news as a phenomenon cannot be overlooked by the sector (Fedeli, 2020; Rivera, 2020).

Whilst there is an emergent interest around fake news in the hospitality industry, the literature is still in an embryonic stage and remains scattered and fragmented (Rivera, 2020). This calls for a need to synthesize the extant hospitality literature around fake news and its creation, dissemination patterns and consequences. In line with addressing the gaps in the literature, the present SLR answers two key research questions (**RQ**s) which are as follows:

RQ1:. What is the status of the research profile on fake news in the hospitality industry?

RQ2:. *What are the research gaps, limitations, and recommendations for scholars and practitioners in the context of setting the future research agenda for fake news in the hospitality industry?*

We strive to answer these research questions by conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) of the extant body of knowledge discussing fake news in the hospitality industry. SLRs are instrumental in capturing the insights from the current body of knowledge and providing a valuable summarization alongside identifying knowledge gaps in the extant literature to guide future research (Tandon et al., 2020).

Prior reviews have made limited attempts to holistically encapsulate the extant body of knowledge on fake news, and to the best of our knowledge, none have surveyed the literature on the phenomenon in the hospitality industry. While a handful of studies have analyzed the literature on fake reviews and provided useful insights (Abedin et al., 2020; Aslam et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2019; Paul and Nikolaev, 2021; Scherr et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020) their coverage has been diverse in nature and have lacked the singular focus on the hospitality industry. Some of them, for instance, have dealt with detection mechanisms for fake reviews (e.g., Paul and Nikolaev, 2021; Scherr et al., 2019), including online spam (e.g., Aslam et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2019) or presented a cross-disciplinary survey of research studies comparing credible and fake reviews (Abedin et al., 2020). Others, such as Wu et al. (2020), recognize the rising emphasis of literature reviews on detecting mechanisms alongside the lack of examination of the antecedents and consequences of fake reviews and address this gap in their SLR, but their review is cross-sectoral in nature. On the contrary, fake news has marred the hospitality industry consistently and is substantiated by a growing body of knowledge on the phenomenon. However, the literature is progressing without a strong theoretical foundation (Rivera, 2020), which is quintessential for advancing research in the area. Our study overcomes these shortcomings and adds crucial insights to hospitality research in three dimensions. First, our study analyzes diverse perspectives around fake news spanning across the hospitality industry and sheds light on the thematic foci in the extant literature. Second, the study not only presents a robust research profile and identifies gaps in the extant literature, but also facilitates broadening the scope of investigation by incorporating varied possibilities surrounding fake news in the hospitality industry. Third, and most importantly, our study

proposes a conceptual framework to inform future research around fake news in the hospitality industry.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: First, we describe the methodological processes leveraged to carry out this review. In section three, we discuss the profile of the existing literature on fake news in the hospitality industry. We then discuss the thematic classifications in section four and highlight the gaps in the extant literature in section five. We then proceed to outline potential areas for advancing research in this domain in section six alongside proposing a conceptual framework to inform future research and conclude by discussing the implications of our study and highlighting limitations in sections seven and eight, respectively. Finally, we reiterate the value of our review study in our concluding remarks.

2. Methodology

SLRs offer a robust methodology towards consolidating literature on a particular topic and helping identify areas of research within and gaps in existing literature (Khanra et al., 2020; Talwar et al., 2020a). In addition, as with past SLRs on technology, we followed stringent protocols (Behera et al., 2019; Dhir et al., 2020) and conducted the literature review in three phases, namely preparation, study selection, and assimilation.

2.1. Preparation

Finding relevant studies is an important but challenging aspect of an SLR, which is further based on adopting the right search protocol and identifying the appropriate databases. While fake news has been a topic of growing interest for hospitality researchers, publications are scattered across different journals. Earlier journal papers adopting the SLR technique have often stated that restricting their study to a selection of articles only from top-rated journals is a limitation of their study (e.g., Chen et al., 2012; Manoharan and Singal, 2017). Hence, with the intent of offering a holistic coverage of published literature, we broadened our search with databases as our first source to identify the articles and then we systematically combed through several journals in the hospitality domain. The sample list of journals included key peer-reviewed journals such as International Journal of Hospitality Management, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Current Issues in Tourism, Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management, Appetite, Tourism Management, Journal of Travel Research and Annals of Tourism Research. It is to be noted that papers related to fake news in the hospitality industry were published in over 250 journals.

The scope of our study lies at the intersection of fake news and the hospitality industry. However, given the vastness of the hospitality industry (Manoharan and Singal, 2017) and the diversity of fake news (Petratos, 2021; Tandoc et al., 2018), we cast a wide net to include one set of keywords within the "title of the studies" representing various terms related to sub-sectors in hospitality and another set of keywords driven by the diversity of fake news within the "title, abstract and keywords of the studies". The details are illustrated in Fig. 1 below.

We employed two well-known databases, Scopus and Web Of Science (WoS), which have been extensively used in prior literature reviews in the hospitality industry (Dhir et al., 2020). We included a third database, EBSCOhost, which has a wide collection of multidisciplinary data has been used previously in hospitality research (Chen et al., 2012). The theme of fake news started to garner significant attention in the scientific community after the 2016 U.S presidential elections (Anderson, 2017; Revez and Corujo, 2021), so much so that 'fake news' was termed the word of the year in 2017 by the Collins dictionary (Flood, 2017). However, to ensure that the SLR was holistic and did not exclude any seminal research prior to 2016, we went ahead and widened our search span to include all studies till January 2022. Our aim was to include studies that were available in these three databases, Scopus, WoS and EBSCOhost and published in peer-reviewed journals in English. These
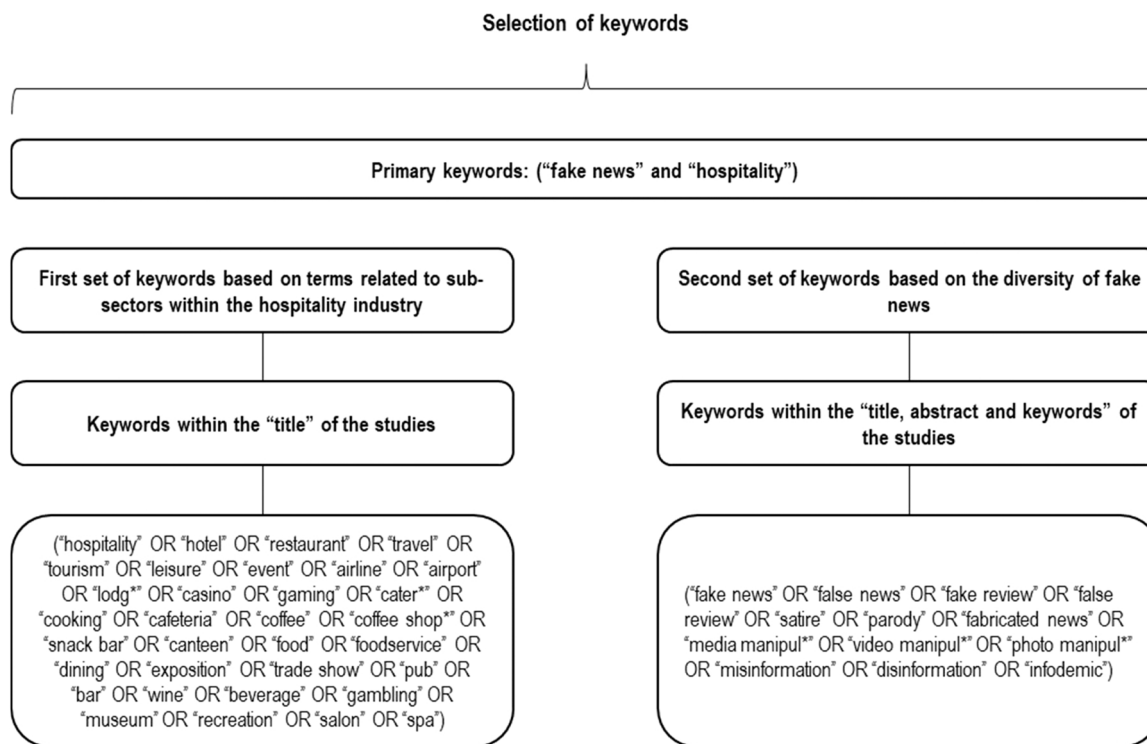
Selection of keywords

Fig. 1. Selection of keywords.

criteria served as the foundation for our screening process, which is described in greater detail in the following sections.

2.2. Study selection

This phase is concerned with identifying relevant and appropriate articles for further evaluation during the review. It consists of three steps: a preliminary database search, the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the selection of appropriate scholarly works.

2.2.1. Initial database search

The search enabled by the set of keywords discussed in the previous section yielded 426, 202 and 315 studies from Scopus, WoS and EBS-COhost respectively. These studies included a diverse set of categories including journal papers and gray literature such as conferences, review articles and so on and belonged to different languages. After pruning the results to include peer-reviewed journal papers in the English language, we were left with 269 Scopus listed, 159 WoS listed, and 166 EBSCOhost listed articles. Further screening for duplicates yielded a total of 392 articles.

2.2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

We developed a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria for our study based on prior research (Tandon et al., 2020; R. Zhang et al., 2017). The following criteria were used: (1) studies related to the hospitality in-dustry; (2) studies discussing fake news in the hospitality industry; and (3) empirical studies employing qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods research methodology. The following exclusion criteria were incorporated: (1) review articles; and (2) studies involving only a theoretical or conceptual framework.

2.2.3. Selection of relevant studies

The selection of relevant studies entails a thorough evaluation of their robustness, relevance, and quality using a set of specific criteria (Webster and Watson, 2002). To identify papers relevant to this study's objectives, the screening process initially looked through the titles and

abstracts of the 392 studies to get a sense of ideas and perspectives discussed in them. We then applied the first and second inclusion criteria described in the preceding section to identify 90 research studies that were likely to fulfill the objectives of our study and excluded 302 studies that did not align with the scope of our study. We then examined the full text of 90 papers to determine and comprehend their research objective (s), design, and data analysis processes, and applied all the previously established inclusion and exclusion criteria. We performed a final round of screening to ensure stringent norms around the quality of articles for the purpose of our study. The scoring criteria for measuring the quality score of studies is detailed out in (see Table S1 supplementary material).

Articles could attain a maximum score of 8 and hence, in line with the approaches by Tandon et al. (2020) and Khan et al. (2021), a score of 4 was fixed as the threshold, with articles scoring below this threshold eliminated and the rest forming part of the final corpus of studies for evaluation. We engaged in evaluating the quality of each article, and as a result, 47 articles were eliminated for not fulfilling the quality criteria, leaving 43 studies to form the evaluation set. As a final step, to resolve any feedback loops, a forward and backward citation chaining technique was utilized, which resulted in the identification of 8 articles, all of which passed the quality criteria and were included in the final corpus of 51 articles, as shown in the flowchart in Fig. 2 (see Table S4 in sup-plementary material for more details).

2.3. Assimilation

This phase of assimilation entailed extracting information from the final corpus of selected studies, organizing and presenting it, and con-ducting relevant analyses on the corpus in order to meet our research objectives (Dhir et al., 2020). The focus here was on drawing out a research profile of the extant literature, exploring the underlying themes, identifying gaps in the literature, defining the current intellec-tual contours, proposing an agenda for future research, and developing a conceptual framework.
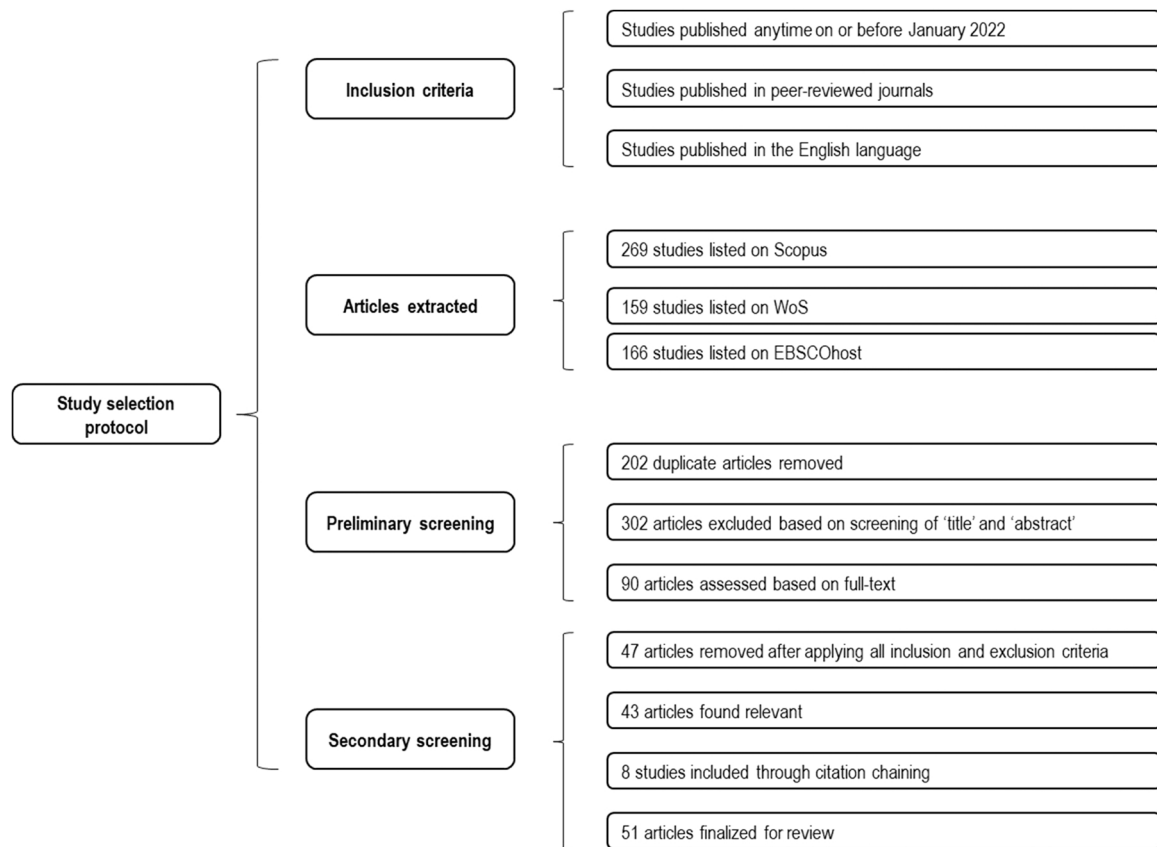
Study selection protocol	Inclusion criteria	Studies published anytime on or before January 2022
		Studies published in peer-reviewed journals
		Studies published in the English language
	Articles extracted	269 studies listed on Scopus
		159 studies listed on WoS
		166 studies listed on EBSCOhost
	Preliminary screening	202 duplicate articles removed
		302 articles excluded based on screening of 'title' and 'abstract'
		90 articles assessed based on full-text
	Secondary screening	47 articles removed after applying all inclusion and exclusion criteria
		43 articles found relevant
		8 studies included through citation chaining
		51 articles finalized for review

Fig. 2. Flowchart of study selection.

3. Research profile

We profiled the final list of studies that formed the corpus for our literature review to learn the current state of research on fake news in the hospitality industry. Fig. 3 shows that research on fake news in the hospitality industry has been steadily rising since 2015, with over 85% of studies in the corpus published in 2015 and beyond.

We further observed that over 75% of the research studies (n = 39) had employed a quantitative approach in their research, while 22% (n = 11) had employed a qualitative approach with one study employing a mixed-methods approach (see Fig. 4).

We observed that a significant number of studies (n = 19) focused on data from USA as a country while six studies focused on China with three each on Italy and Malaysia. The details are provided in Fig. 5.

Furthermore, we performed an analysis of author provided keywords by generating a word cloud using the R programming language. This word cloud led analysis revealed that "fake", "reviews", "online", "hotel", "food", "media", and "information" were the most frequently used keywords (see Fig. 6).

We further analyzed the publications by country based on the institute to which the first author is affiliated. This analysis revealed that
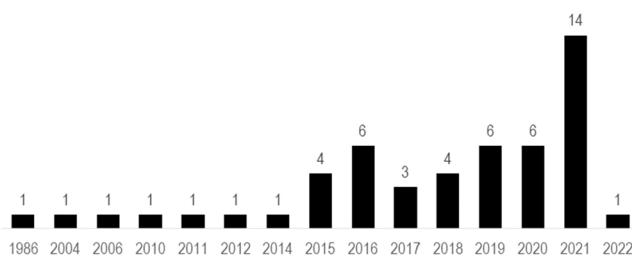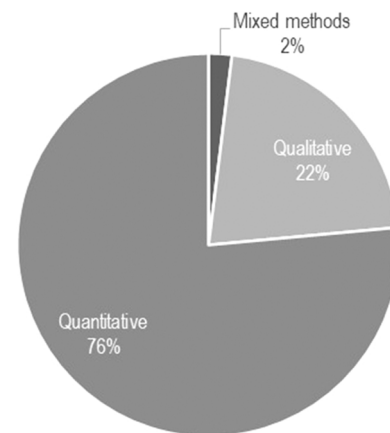

Fig. 4. Research design of the selected studies.

USA dominates the publications around fake news in the hospitality industry with 33% (n = 17) followed by China and the U.K with 14% and 8% of publications, respectively. The details are summarized in Fig. 7.

4. Thematic foci of prior literature

We examined the full text of the final corpus of studies to deliver critical insights around the discussions in extant literature around fake news in the hospitality industry. We relied on content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) which has been leveraged effectively in prior studies (Khan et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2020). In line with guidance from Miles and Huberman (1994), the corpus was analyzed and coded to examine and reveal the thematic foci in extant literature. Towards this intent, an
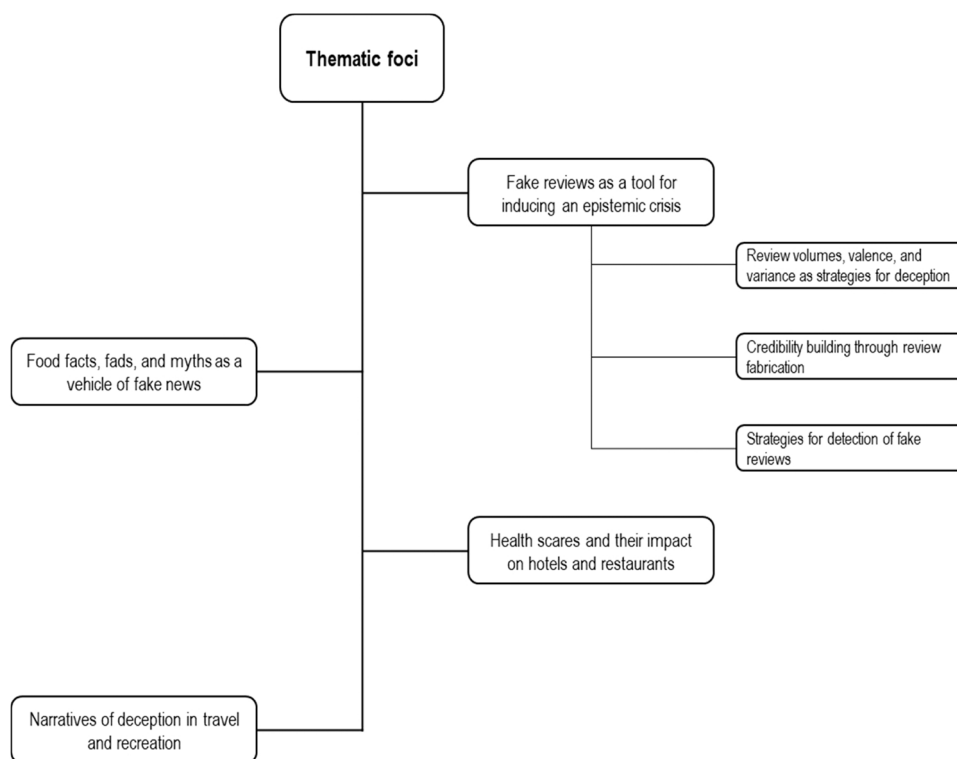

Fig. 3. Year-wise distribution of the selected studies.

Fig. 5. Geographic scope of the selected studies.

Fig. 6. Word cloud of author provided keywords.

Fig. 7. Publications by country based on institute of first author affiliation.

iterative approach (Locke, 2022) was adopted by moving forward and backward between the available data and the emerging potential themes and the process continued till the authors arrived at a consensus. Through this process, four broad themes emerged (see Fig. 8, Table S2 in supplementary material) that characterized the research on fake news in the hospitality industry. In this section, we draw out a detailed presentation of the four themes.

4.1. Fake reviews as a tool for inducing an epistemic crisis

The increasing popularity of the internet has led to electronic word of mouth (eWOM) online as an important determinant for customers seeking information on services (Filieri and McLeay, 2014; Zhou et al., 2014). This growing importance of eWOM makes online customer reviews an important source of information in the customer's decision-making process (Ye et al., 2011). Furthermore, these online reviews in the form of user-generated content (UGC) places reputation management at the forefront for organizations (Baka, 2016) and is an aspect that certainly cannot be ignored (Riegner, 2007). On the flip side, fraudulent practices in the form of fake reviews have been on the rise, with travel companies having to counter it constantly (Witts, 2017, 2021) and consumers acknowledging it as a growing concern (Uberall, 2021).

The escalating menace of fake reviews has led empirical research in the hospitality industry to heavily focus on the phenomenon and its impact on the sector. We elaborate on the multi-faceted nature of research on fake reviews in this section.

4.1.1. Review volumes, valence, and variance as strategies for deception

Review volume is a measure of the popularity in the market and delivers information on the number of people who have experienced the particular product or service (Figini et al., 2020). It can help in reducing the consumers' uncertainty and prior research suggests that it could be associated with an increase in sales as well (Chen et al., 2011; Chintagunta et al., 2010). Review volumes act as a key determinant towards monitoring of platforms by online systems such as TrustYou which offer a rich source of diverse ratings for the likes of hotel managers from across platforms (Bigné et al., 2020). High rating volumes are crucial for credibility assessment and induce decision heuristics in that high levels are an indicator of risk assurance with the contrary indicative of risk signaling (Blal and Sturman, 2014; Lu et al., 2020).

Prior studies have found high rating volumes to alleviate the negative effects of polarized reviews on dining choices in intrinsically motivated consumers (Lu et al., 2020). While some websites only allow verified reviews, high review volumes which are crucial for offering an in-depth and holistic coverage of consumer experience has deterred several platforms from sacrificing this key metric for verification of reviews on their sites (Lappas et al., 2016). However, review injection by competitors as an attack strategy aimed at improving visibility has also been found to increase the probability of being detected by platforms for the fraudulent practice (Lappas et al., 2016). Producing high volumes of deceptive reviews, however, may not be beneficial to businesses, given the costs involved in creating and posting such content online (Choi et al., 2017). Furthermore, the burgeoning volumes could surpass consumers' information processing capabilities, making it challenging to process content that is genuinely relevant to their needs and translate to an information overload (Peco-Torres et al., 2021). On the contrary, it may be noted that when the rating volumes are low, it ceases to be a diagnostic cue and accentuates the importance of valence as a metric for the decisioning process (Lu et al., 2020).

Prior research suggests that the effect of review volumes on sales is lower when compared to the effect of review valence (Yang et al., 2018). Review valence refers to the polarity of the sentiment (positive or negative) expressed in the review and is an indicator of the product's or service's reputation and quality (Kim and Gupta, 2012). The valence of fake reviews in the context of hotels and restaurants has been found to

Fig. 8. Thematic foci.

depend on the location with properties attracting more negative reviews when situated in close proximity to competitors (Mayzlin et al., 2014) and more positive fake reviews when their reputation is not well established (Luca and Zervas, 2016). Further, in the context of the valency of fake reviews, E. Y. Wang et al. (2021) study the interaction effect of emotional and linguistic cues with review valence as a boundary condition to understand the conditions under which the interactions were most likely to happen. The study indicates a higher demand for mental resources in the setting of creating negative reviews compared to good reviews, as emotion and cognition compete intensely for mental resources in the former case (Wang et al., 2021). However, consumers tend to combine review valence with content to assess the trustworthiness of reviews (Filieri, 2016), while review valence in combination with review extremity has been leveraged to detect fake reviews (Filieri, 2016; Hlee et al., 2021). It may also be noted that when the reviewer's identity is not disclosed, the role of review valence is lower in significance with regard to impacting review trustworthiness (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012). On the contrary, when the identity is disclosed, reviews with a negative valence are perceived as more credible than those with a positive valence (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012).

Beyond review volume and valence, variance in reviews is another important feature that has largely been overlooked in prior literature, while high variability in ratings has been associated with increased uncertainty over quality and reduction in sales (Figini et al., 2020). Review variability helps in capturing the heterogeneity of opinions around the service with low variability characteristic of a consistent evaluation (Figini et al., 2020). Studies have found platforms with non-verified rating systems to have higher variability over those which only allow for verified ratings (Figini et al., 2020). Industry position of hotels has also been identified as a determinant of the level of variability in ratings, with early entrants in the market receiving higher average ratings (Hsu et al., 2012). In the same context, platforms that allow only verified ratings have been shown to experience a faster convergence of ratings towards their long-term scores, unlike platforms with unverified reviews, which demonstrate greater volatility in the early phases of the review window (Figini et al., 2020).

4.1.2. Credibility building through review fabrication

Readers of online reviews tend to associate lower level of credibility with reviews which are overly simplistic (Ghose and Ipeirotis, 2011). Hence, deceivers tend to put in additional efforts to fabricate reviews that sound realistic (Li et al., 2020). Deceivers exhibit more nervous behaviors than truth-tellers (Granhag and Strömwall, 2004; Vrij et al., 2019) while these also act as cues towards detection of fake reviews. Prior studies in hospitality research have shown a positive correlation between emotional words and fake reviews (Wang et al., 2021). However, the detection of such reviews may not be easy as the online environment offers review fabricators sufficient time to carry out a careful imitation of the written emotion characteristic of authentic reviews (Johnson, 2007).

Writing fake negative reviews can be more demanding on the mental resources as compared to the fabrication of positive fake reviews (Wang et al., 2021). In this context, cognitive expressions compete with emotional expressions for mental resources more fiercely while fabricating negative reviews in contrast to positive reviews, which demand a lesser mental load (Wang et al., 2021). Furthermore, review fabricators also tend to use more social cues to enhance the perceived truthfulness of their reviews (Li et al., 2020). However, it is inherently challenging for deceivers to offer perceptual cues in the review having not experienced the service and in line with this, research finds a negative association of perceptual cues with fake reviews (Li et al., 2020). Also, research suggests that deceivers in the context of hotels and restaurants are more likely to be local individuals as their familiarity with the location enhances their ability to write more convincing fake reviews (Li et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Li et al. (2020) suggest that established restaurants have a greater propensity to attract fake reviews over new ones who have an incentive to post negative reviews to sabotage the competitor's reputation and promote their own brand. However, negative reviews could lead them to being accused of online defamation (Stohl et al.,

2017) while posting positive fake reviews may be easier for the new establishments to promote their business (Lappas et al., 2016). Furthermore, research suggests that fraudulent positive reviews are associated with changes in the business' own reputation, while fake negative reviews are associated with changing patterns among the business' competition (Luca and Zervas, 2016). Ahmad and Sun (2018) suggest that consumers affected by fabricated reviews tend to avenge their bad experience by engaging in negative word of mouth.

Misleading information such as deceptive property images have also been used to attract customers. In this context, Kuo et al. (2015) illustrate the consequences of misleading photos of hotels on lowering of brand trust, with consumer wrath and regret, including the intent to spread negative eWOM, being greater for expensive hotels and particularly so if the trip was for hedonic purposes. However, Zhang et al. (2019) demonstrate that consumers exhibit higher levels of trust and are more tolerant of hotels when misleading images of the property were posted by a microcelebrity.

4.1.3. Strategies for detection of fake reviews

In the context of fake review detection, Martinez-Torres and Toral (2019) analyze both honest and deceptive positive and negative reviews and reveal important insights. Their research suggests that while deceptive positive reviews focus on the hotel's location and ubication with respect to specific points of interest in the location such as key tourist spots, authentic positive reviews tend to move beyond ubication of the hotel and meals and focus on the location's characteristics and feelings related to the stay experience in the hotel (Martinez-Torres and Toral, 2019). In a similar vein, the authors suggest that fraudulent negative reviews focus on the tangible aspects while authentic negative reviews lean more towards feelings and expectations held of the place (Martinez-Torres and Toral, 2019). Hlee et al. (2021) highlight the combined role of review valence and extremity in diagnosing the credibility of a review. Moon et al. (2019) find an increased use of extreme words when deceivers write reviews irrespective of its valence and develop a trust measure to assess the genuineness of a review based on review extremity as one of the parameters. Zhang et al. (2016) extend fake review detection beyond verbal features such as semantic cues and incorporate nonverbal features such as social behaviors and posting patterns of reviewers and find the latter to be more effective in detecting fraudulent reviews than the verbal features. However, Zhang et al. (2016) express concerns over the accuracy of models created in the context of fake review detection as many of them have been constructed on the back of manually generated fake reviews.

4.2. Food facts, fads, and myths as a vehicle of fake news

The consumption of foods is an activity at the lowest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Belonax, 1997) but also extends to serve and satisfy the emotional and social needs of individuals (Hjalager, 2002; Visser, 2015). Foods can be a medium for social engagement (Roberts and Hall, 2001) but more importantly, also a vehicle of creative expression for advertisers and restaurants to influence consumer food choices (Asp, 1999). This intent to drive specific food choices among consumers makes food a target for fake news campaigns.

Brands can be highly vulnerable to fake news which in turn can affect the purchasing decisions of consumers (Visentin et al., 2019). However, research suggests that natural food brands may not be as vulnerable as the rest, with consumers being largely convinced about the value of such brands and their positive effects on the environment and society at large (Bezbaruah et al., 2021). Furthermore, the individual traits of universalism also make them resilient against fake news, while their belief in governmental regulations and certifications result in placing trust in natural food brands alongside being resilient towards fake news against such brands (Bezbaruah et al., 2021).

Psychological factors and social influences also determine the individuals' vulnerability to fake news related to food consumption with people's predisposition to change making them more vulnerable to social influences and belief in fake news (Castellini et al., 2021). However, some studies suggest that socio-demographic factors such as age, education and gender are not related to individual's propensity to believe in food-related fake news (e.g., Castellini et al., 2021) while some have found gender and education related variations in food related misinformation (Betterley et al., 1986).

Knowledge of nutritional aspects is a necessary but not sufficient criterion towards tackling misinformation (Florença et al., 2021). For example, manipulated images of foods on advertisements have been shown to improve the perceived healthfulness of such foods and also positively influence purchasing decisions (Lazard et al., 2018). In a similar vein, several food-related myths are prevalent among people despite high levels of awareness around nutritional aspects, which in turn calls for a need to debunk such food myths (Florença et al., 2021). However, debunking efforts may not render the desired effect unless they incorporate individuals' prior beliefs (Garrett et al., 2013). For example, Wisker (2020) studied consumers' response to fake news related to halal food in a Muslim-majority country and highlighted the need for marketing managers to exercise caution in marketing products by being sensitive to individuals' religiosity as fake news around food which impacts one's moral code could result in anger and hatred towards the food brands.

Corrective messages to combat misinformation, according to Wang (2021), should ideally be delivered from authoritative sources such as experts and those with high levels of social endorsements, as messages received without credibility cues may not yield the desired changes in perception, with people processing messages in a biased way that supports their preexisting beliefs. In a similar vein, Bode et al. (2021) leverage the gateway belief model to reveal the effectiveness of expert organizations in delivering corrective messages around misperceptions related to genetically modified (GM) foods which also helps boost consumption behaviors among individuals while Deng and Hu (2019) highlight the role of individuals' trust in GM scientists and government in positively impacting acceptance of GM foods. Deng and Hu (2019) also suggest that social media sources could be key sources of misinformation and find consumers acquiring information through such sources less likely to embrace GM foods over the rest who sought information through other sources.

Media literacy and consumer education around nutritional aspects can also help fight nutritional misinformation delivered to the public through various forms of media such as newspapers and televisions (Hindin et al., 2004). Fake news related to food safety can fuel panic while many consumers may lack the ability to discern the accuracy of such fake news as noted in a study by Soon (2020). However, scandals can result in a loss of trust, denting consumer confidence and making them increasingly anxious and critical about the safety of food they consume (Bánáti, 2011). In this context, Xu et al. (2017) discuss how milk-related scandals in China have resulted in a loss of consumer confidence in domestic milk products, especially those aimed at infants and children. These safety related apprehensions have led even price-sensitive consumers to pay a premium for food products which carry additional safety attributes while also showing confidence in government's food safety measures vis-à-vis certifications by third-party agencies (Xu et al., 2017). In a similar vein, Deng and Hu (2019) highlight the need for governments and expert sources to make extra efforts to gain the public's trust, especially in scenarios when consumer confidence is floundering in the wake of scandals and widespread misinformation about foods.

Jaffe and Gertler (2006) express concerns over consumer deskilling, which has led them to lose the ability to make the right choices concerning foods while the agro-food industry, in the pretense of responding to consumer demand has manipulated consumers to embrace packaged and processed foods. In this context, health and nutrition-related claims through food labels on the packaging have been found to impact people's food choices. Hence, countries have introduced

regulations and warning labels to curb misinformation through claims on such food labels (Cruz-Casarrubias et al., 2021). Furthermore, some food labels may be misleading and redundant and tend to be overpriced due to the consumers' willingness to pay a premium for products such as organic foods and also their lack of a priori scientific knowledge of food production (Wilson and Lusk, 2020). However, in this context, offering corrective information regarding such redundant labels through disclaimers may not be sufficient to change their purchasing behaviors (Wilson and Lusk, 2020). The findings are similar to those from the study by Müller and Gaus (2015) who found that when individuals were exposed to negative media information regarding organic food products, significant negative effects were observed in behavioral intentions but no significant effects were reported in their self-reported behavior. However, the authors caution producers of organic food brands against complacency as accumulation of misapprehensions about organic food in the long term may translate to actual changes in purchasing decisions (Müller and Gaus, 2015).

4.3. Health scares and their impact on hotels and restaurants

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt across businesses, with the hospitality industry among the worst-hit sectors. The pandemic has also been a breeding ground for fake news in the industry. For example, a false notice regarding the closure of restaurants and hotels in India during the virus outbreak was in circulation but later debunked by the Indian government's ministry of tourism as fake news (Press Information Bureau, 2020). In a similar vein, fake news regarding vaccinations has also marred the fight against COVID-19, with people expressing hesitancy over vaccines due to its purported side effects (Welle, 2022) while misinformation related to restrictions on unvaccinated people from shopping in supermarkets created panic in France (AAP FactCheck, 2021).

Allen et al. (2015) discuss influenza-related vaccination apprehensions among restaurant workers, including the risk of contracting illness after being vaccinated, as well as the belief that influenza was not a concern for young and healthy workers. Panic buying and food hoarding have been prevalent during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Wang and Hao, 2020) and in this context, Charilaou and Vijaykumar (2021) discuss the catalytic role of social media in contributing misinformation which has a response in panic buying among consumers and also find younger adults and people from lower-income groups more susceptible to such food hoarding behaviors. Such stockpiling by consumers can have a catastrophic effect on supermarkets and other retailers. For example, websites of major supermarket chains crashed after the UK prime minister announced lockdown (Shaw, 2020) while most supermarkets were found to have empty shelves due to the panic buying during the pandemic (Cogley, 2020; Mao, 2020).

Tourism and hotel stays have been battered by the pandemic and as the hospitality industry strives to restore consumer confidence in resuming travel in the "new normal", Peco-Torres et al. (2021) highlight the role of information literacy self-efficacy among tourists which can help them find the right information as per their travel needs alongside discounting fake news, both of which positively influence their perception of hotel safety. Hotels and firms operating in the tourism sector may leverage this vital insight to convey information around COVID-19 related information in a manner that is helpful to the consumers and acts to improve their perception of safety measures offered by the hotel (Peco-Torres et al., 2021).

4.4. Narratives of deception in travel and recreation

Museums are an integral part of the hospitality industry (Gofman et al., 2011) but their role in education cannot be discounted. Museums are looked upon as an environment that enriches learning and cultivates minds through the depth of experience they offer (Faleti, 2017). However, museums can be a source for disseminating information with low

credibility. Sports is another sector that is susceptible to fake news. For example, players' football transfers across clubs has been a target for fake news (Smith, 2017) with experts acknowledging the negative impact of such rumors on football clubs (Bright and Subedar, 2017). The aviation industry is another sector affected by fake news. There have been several instances of fake news, such as Emirates airlines firing pilots for refusing to fly to Israel (Arab News, 2021) and Ethiopian airlines laying off employees (Warandhaabmedia, 2020).

Hospitality literature around fake news in these specific sectors is scattered and few in number. For example, Wang et al. (2016a) lean on this misinformation agenda of certain museums and argue that the China tobacco museum has become a platform for tobacco promotion. The authors reveal that the museum, funded by the China tobacco monopoly, displays tobacco-related artifacts and awards which exhibit scientists' achievements around low tar and less harmful tobacco research (Wang et al., 2016b). The authors conduct a focus group study with museum visitors and argue that such a display of tobacco-related exhibits tend to glorify tobacco use and cultivate a generation of future smokers while such promotion and sponsorship conflicts with the regulations of the world health organization's framework convention on tobacco control (Wang et al., 2016b). In the context of aviation, Rietjens (2019) discusses the disinformation surrounding the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014. In doing so, the author highlights various deceptive messages which were disseminated in the media post the disappearance of the flight and the strategic intent behind those messages alongside the effect of such messages in fueling confusion and disrupting international relations (Rietjens, 2019). In summary, this theme of deception in travel and recreation remains largely underexplored, although these areas form an integral part of the hospitality industry.

5. Research gaps

5.1. Skewed focus on fake reviews

The extant hospitality literature on fake news has predominantly focused on fake reviews while other areas which are also marred by misinformation and disinformation campaigns have received scant attention in literature. Furthermore, the studies on these fake reviews also have several shortcomings. First, these studies are predominantly centered around hotels and restaurants (e.g. Banerjee, 2022; Cruz et al., 2021; Fong et al., 2021; Hlee et al., 2021; Hsu et al., 2012; Sanliöz Özgen and Kozak, 2015) while other areas such as sporting events, airline services, and leisure events have remained largely underexplored although the likes of sites such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) (Bonk, 2021), National football league's (NFL) game pass app (Malyon, 2017) have also been victims of fake reviews. Motives for fake reviews in such scenarios, however, may range from organized efforts to buy reviews to promote movies with favorable blurbs (Gaines, 2001) to insider efforts to promote sporting apps in an attempt to salvage the reputation of such apps (Malyon, 2017), while the long term repercussions of such actions remain largely unknown and merit attention. Second, most studies have focused on studying open review posting platforms with TripAdvisor and Yelp being the dominant focal points (e.g., Li et al., 2020; Mkono, 2018; O'Connor, 2010). The verification mechanisms in closed review posting platforms make it harder to post fake reviews vis-à-vis open review posting platforms (Figini et al., 2020), and while this marked difference merits discussion, it has largely remained underexplored in literature with the exception of a few papers (e.g., Figini et al., 2020; Mayzlin et al., 2014; Moon et al., 2019). Third, the inherent challenge in most discussions on fake reviews is that manipulation is not directly observable but is inferred (Mayzlin et al., 2014). To overcome this challenge, some studies have employed manually created fake review datasets (e.g., Banerjee, 2022). Doing so attracts two limitations in that the psychological state of mind of individuals manually creating these reviews tend to be different from that of the actual fake

reviewers (Mukherjee et al., 2013b; Zhang et al., 2016) and detection models constructed using these manually generated datasets may lack the accuracy of those developed with actual fake reviews (Mukherjee et al., 2013a) which may eventually render them ineffective in real-world detection scenarios (Mukherjee et al., 2013b).

5.2. Atheoretical nature of studies

Our review of literature revealed over 55% of the studies (n = 29) which did not utilize any theory or conceptual framework to formulate their hypotheses. Furthermore, we found limited evidence of theoretical underpinnings to bolster the arguments and insights generated through the studies (see Table S4 in supplementary material). Among the studies that employed a theory, we found the theory of interpersonal deception being leveraged the most (Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2016). Among the qualitative studies, several studies lacked the inductive reasoning to develop theories from specific observations and insights obtained from the study (e.g., Allen et al., 2015; Rietjens, 2019; Wang et al., 2016a) with the exception of a few such as the study by Zelenka et al. (2021), which culminated in a conceptual model for providing verified reviews of tourism services and the study by Filieri (2016) which led to the development of a framework for trustworthiness and persuasion in eWOM communications.

5.3. Lack of cross-cultural analysis

There have been fervent calls for cross-cultural studies to examine how consumers engage with fake news (Kumar et al., 2021a; Talwar et al., 2019). However, our review revealed the lack of such analysis, with most studies being restrictive by focusing on individuals in a particular country or hotels and restaurants in specific cities. For example, Sanliöz Özgen and Kozak (2015) focused only on hotels in Istanbul, Turkey, while Hsu et al. (2012) and O'Connor (2010) focused on top hotels in Las Vegas and London, respectively. Further, among the studies which employed primary data, most engaged participants from the USA (e.g., Bode et al., 2021; Hindin et al., 2004; Wang, 2021) and offered limited clarity on the ethnicity of participants (e.g., Bode et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2011).

As stated earlier, the extant literature on fake news has highlighted the lack of cross-cultural analysis and solicited the need to compare findings from developed and developing nations (Kumar et al., 2021a). In this context, past research on fake news has observed cross-cultural variations (Dabbous et al., 2021) with individuals' engagement with fake news varying by societal settings (Rampersad and Althiyabi, 2020). However, close to sixty percent of studies in our review (n = 31) focused on developed economies (e.g., Castellini et al., 2021; Charilaou and Vijaykumar, 2021; Ciasullo et al., 2017; Hlee et al., 2021; Moon et al., 2019; Toma et al., 2020; Vainio et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2016). Among the studies which focused on developing nations, the focus was predominantly on China (Ahmad and Sun, 2018; Deng and Hu, 2019; Ji et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2016a,b; Xu et al., 2017) and Malaysia (Rietjens, 2019; Soon, 2020; Wisker, 2020). Although some studies incorporated diverse samples with multiple nationalities or ethnicities (e.g., Banerjee, 2022; Choi et al., 2017; Filieri, 2016), we found limited evidence of discussions examining cross-cultural differences.

5.4. Challenges with generalizability of findings

Our analysis of the extant literature reveals concerns around the generalizability of findings. We discuss three related concerns here. First, we noted discrepancies in the sampling strategies employed in the studies as part of our review. In general, the importance of robust sampling techniques is understated, and the lack of it presents issues related to generalizability (Andrade, 2021). Several studies in our review employed non-random sampling techniques through the use of convenience (e.g., Charilaou and Vijaykumar, 2021; Florença et al.,

2021) and purposive sampling strategies (e.g., Filieri, 2016; Sanliöz Özgen and Kozak, 2015). Furthermore, most studies did not justify their choice of sampling strategy with the exception of a few (e.g., Ahmad and Sun, 2018), although they admitted to this choice as a limitation hampering generalizability (e.g., Filieri, 2016; Hindin et al., 2004).

A second concern was the lack of diversity in data. Secondary data sources reduce the efforts otherwise required in the collection of primary data, but despite this advantage, several studies in our review were narrow in focus. Li et al. (2020), for instance, focused on reviews of Yelp's top 100 restaurants in the USA, Moon et al. (2019) on the top hotels in Manhattan, New York, Martinez-Torres and Toral (2019) on top hotels in Chicago and Luca and Zervas (2016) on restaurants in Boston, Massachusetts. Even among those studies which engaged non-US samples, the samples lacked diversity and holistic coverage. For example, Figini et al. (2020) analyzed reviews of hotels in a seaside destination in Italy, and Vainio et al. (2018) engaged internet users in Finland.

Third, among the studies which employed qualitative approaches, the adequacy of samples was a noticeable concern. For example, Sanliöz Özgen and Kozak (2015) conducted their analysis based on nine interviews with participating managers of hotels in Istanbul, Turkey, while the study by Wang et al. (2016a) engaged a focus group with only twelve museum visitors. In this context, while large sample sizes in qualitative research do not necessarily guarantee applicability and may infact be a compromise of breadth over depth (Hammarberg et al., 2016), naturalistic inquiry is encouraged towards a point of data saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Sampling sizes in qualitative research may thus be justified through the process of sampling till data saturation (Boddy, 2016) although it is not clear if the qualitative studies in our corpus, with the exception of a few (e.g., Filieri, 2016), applied this technique towards their research.

5.5. Lack of studies examining mediating and moderating effects

Prior literature stresses the need to examine the moderating and mediating effects on the variables in the context of engaging with fake news (Talwar et al., 2019). Further, within the context of theory building and testing in hospitality research, moderating and mediating effects play a vital role in advancing our understanding of phenomena of interest to the discipline (Ro, 2012). However, we noted several studies in our review which did not explore the mediating and moderating factors in the fake news engagement process. For instance, while Filieri (2016) highlighted the role of perceived review trustworthiness as a mediating factor in the relationship between review characteristics and the persuasion effect of the review, most studies with the exception of a few (e.g., Wisker, 2020) did not incorporate this variable in their analysis. In the same vein, Filieri (2016) highlighted the moderating effect of consumer involvement in the relationship between source trustworthiness and perceived review trustworthiness, while this moderating variable has largely remained underexplored in the extant literature. While our review did uncover a few moderating factors such as prior beliefs about consumption of a particular food (Vainio et al., 2018), sense of power (Choi et al., 2017) and religiosity (Wisker, 2020), they only offered a limited understanding of the conditions which influence the fake news engagement process.

6. Directions for future research

This comprehensive analysis of fake news in the hospitality industry reveals a thorough yet fragmented research on the phenomenon, including the antecedents of fake news propaganda, its processing by the consumers, and consequences. This necessitates a more focused research approach towards conducting a thorough analysis of the phenomenon in hospitality research. We first offer recommendations to address the research gaps and put forth a comprehensive framework to guide future research. We then lay out a series of research questions for scholarly

investigation in future works.

6.1. Potential research areas

In this section, we propose recommendations to address the gaps in the extant literature which were highlighted earlier through an extensive review of studies.

6.1.1. Expanding the boundaries of fake reviews

In the last section, we discussed the significant but restricted focus of fake reviews related to hotels and restaurants. This presents an opportunity to explore the phenomenon in varied contexts such as airlines, amusement parks, museums and so on, which have not been immune to the effects of fake news, as detailed in Section 5.1. Furthermore, we are noticing a rising trend of deepfake messages which has the potential to contaminate the public discourse on important matters. This booming area of deepfake research (Westerlund, 2019), coupled with the importance of customer reviews in areas such as tourism (Tuomi, 2021) presents a myriad of possibilities directed towards causing havoc and necessitates extensive research on the evolving nature of the phenomenon.

6.1.2. Enhancing the theoretical underpinnings

Our review revealed a dearth of theory-driven research in the context of fake news in the hospitality industry, with over fifty percent of studies in our corpus adopting an atheoretical approach. Theory-led research will help refine the overall understanding of how fake news is generated, the stimuli and cues that individuals anchor on to perceive the validity of such news, the reasons they share such news, and the mechanisms of dissemination. Furthermore, studies may also leverage the process of inductive reasoning to develop novel theories from specific observations in the unique context of the hospitality industry.

6.1.3. Advancing generalizability through cross-geographic diversification

We offer two suggestions to maneuver this challenge of generalizability. First, analytical generalizability can be achieved in qualitative research if similar findings are obtained from other case studies as well (Yin, 2010). For example, while Hsu et al. (2012) focus on Las Vegas as a venue, validating their results in a different setting and review platform may augment the findings from this study. Second, the lack of geographical diversity in samples can be addressed through replication studies in different countries. For example, studies by Wang et al. (2021) and Ahmad and Sun (2018) may be replicated by incorporating samples of hotels from other cities to progress towards generalizability.

6.1.4. Exploring the validity of assumptions

In line with the essence of advancing literature which lies not just in gap spotting but also challenging assumptions (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011), we argue that the latter provides an avenue for expanding the horizons of hospitality research on fake news. In this context, we offer suggestions regarding a few potential areas for exploration. For example, scholars have leveraged perception theory to assess how visual manipulations in food advertising influence consumption choices in individuals (Lazard et al., 2018). However, emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR) applications have the potential to distort reality through illusory effects (Drori et al., 2020), which may challenge the fundamental assumptions of perception theory. While virtual reality (VR) is being extensively investigated in the context of consumer food choices (e.g., Cheah et al., 2020), exposure to images in such virtually created environments may result in a different effect of visual manipulations, which could be contrary to previous findings and hence, merit further discussion.

6.1.5. Examining the interplay of mediation and moderation mechanisms

Prior studies which have examined the role of mediating and mediating variables in the context of fake news in hospitality industry have predominantly assumed that consumers determine the authenticity of the news through self-evaluation. However, individuals tend to seek confirmation of their behavior in instances when they suffer from low self-esteem, which in turn makes them susceptible to interpersonal influences (Cohen and Prinstein, 2006; Lansu et al., 2015). An analysis of such complex scenarios demands an examination of the interplay of mediation effects such as the attitudes held towards the product or service and moderation effects such as interpersonal influences, anxiety levels, and openness to change. Furthermore, most studies assumed that the process of evaluating and believing in fake news is linear in nature and the relationships were thus examined based on exposure to a single mode of information such as false reviews or news articles. However, it is possible that individuals seek information from multiple sources such as different websites, videos, and photos which opens up the possibility of a fuzzy decisioning process. Such complex multi-criteria decision-making in the context of fake news evaluation calls for greater attention in the hospitality literature.

6.2. Conceptual framework

Based on the insights obtained from this review of extant literature and analysis of interdisciplinary research, we discuss a conceptual framework (see Fig. 9) to offer a holistic view of the relationships among the key constructs in the context of fake news in the hospitality industry. In doing so, we depict the associations among them and highlight the relationships which have thus far been underexplored but hold the potential for deeper examination.

6.2.1. Theoretical underpinnings of the framework

The conceptual model is theoretically underpinned by the Stimulus-Organism-Behavior-Consequence (SOBC) framework proposed by Davis and Luthans (1980) to explain the complexities which manifest in human behavior. The framework blends and extends the salient features of the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and the antecedent-behavior-consequence framework by Skinner (1963). Several studies have utilized this framework in the context of consumer decision making (e.g., Bigne et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021a) indicating the suitability of this framework to examine the mechanisms which drive consumer intentions. Furthermore, SOBC provides a basis to conceptualize our framework as a multi-tiered mechanism which in turn enables researchers to contemplate the outcomes through a complex interaction of several antecedents, mediating and moderating effects. In our study, we leverage SOBC to argue that the features of fabricated news (S) serve as cues that influence the internal states of consumers of such news (O) which in turn drives their behavioral response of determining the level of authenticity (B) and further leads to consequences (C) which, for example, may be a change in consumption intentions or inadvertent sharing of such news.

6.2.2. Milieux of fake news creation

The environment for creation of fake news must be examined in the context of motivations for creating such news and the genres of fake news generated as an outcome of such motivations. Doing so helps us gain an accurate understanding of the phenomenon and also devise suitable mechanisms to deal with fake news and its consequences (Verstraete et al., 2021).

6.2.2.1. Incentives for fake news creation.
The incentives to create fake news, barring a few exceptions, have remained largely under explored in the extant literature. Choi et al. (2017), for instance, categorized incentives as self-benefiting and other-benefiting and discussed their function in influencing the intent to post phony reviews for hotels and restaurants. In this regard, it is noticed that financial incentives lead individuals to write false reviews for hospitality locations (Choi et al., 2017). From the standpoint of managing the reputation of a hospitality
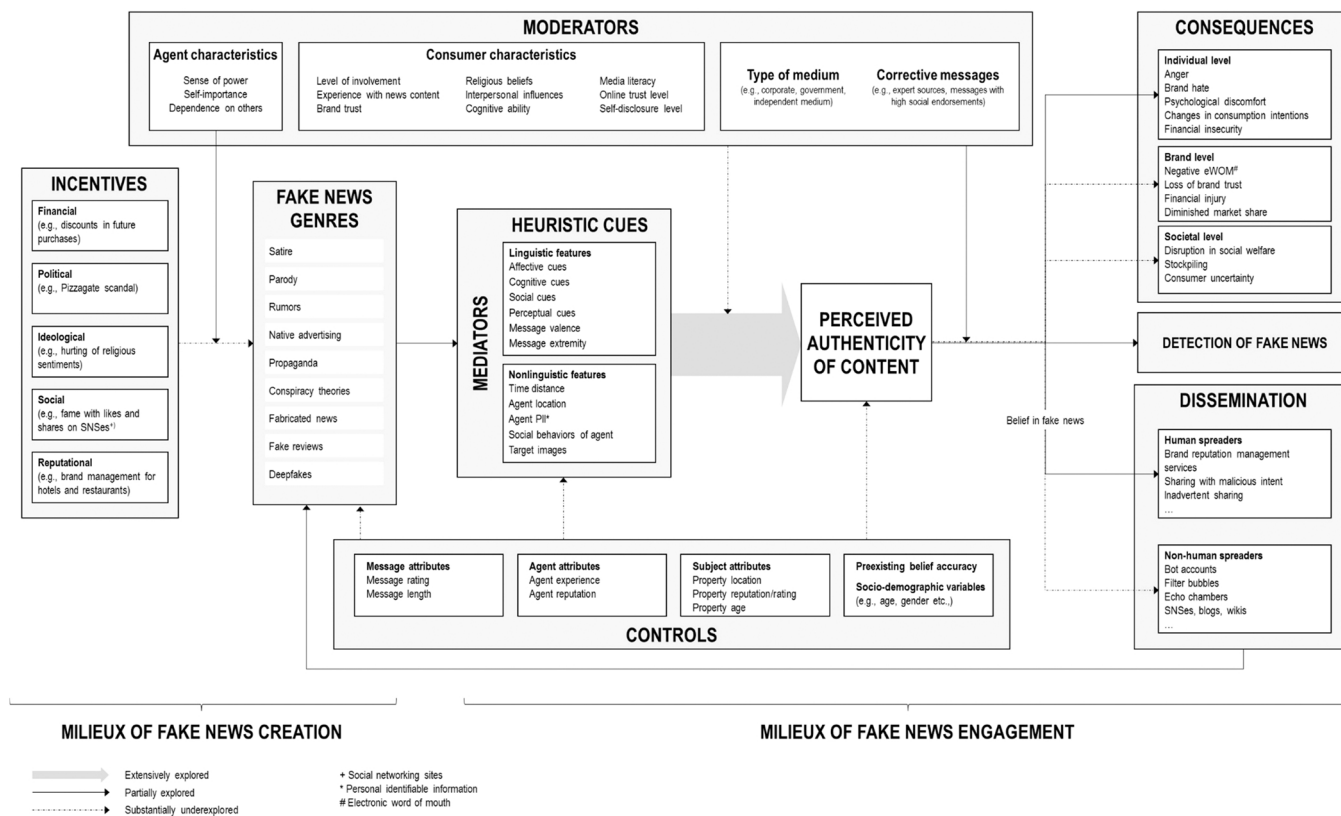
Fig. 9. Conceptual framework delineating the milieux of fake news creation and engagement.

destination, Lappas et al. (2016) explore the insertion of fake reviews to overcome competition in terms of visibility. However, there exists a plethora of other incentives such as political, ideological, and social motivations which remain under researched. For example, the Pizzagate conspiracy theory was a fake news scandal targeting leaders of the democratic party (Lopez, 2016) in what could have transpired as a result of a political motivation while the halal meat fake news that rocked the meat trade in Malaysia (Daniele, 2021) may have originated from the desire for unscrupulous financial gains or with the intention to harm the religious ideologies of the local populace, although such considerations require further investigation. In a similar vein, engagement on social networks is a key metric for the success of hotels (Michopoulou and Moisa, 2019) but the importance of this metric may drive companies to buy likes and shares online (Alba, 2019). These incentives merit attention in future research in the hospitality sector.

6.2.2.2. Fake news genres. The false information in the milieux of fake news creation may be broadly segregated under the umbrella of a variety of misinformation and disinformation narratives. In this context, we include sub-genres such as satire, parody, propaganda, fabricated news, native advertising, fake reviews (Tandoc et al., 2018), rumors (Shelke and Attar, 2019; Zhang and Ghorbani, 2020) and conspiracy theories (Pereira et al., 2020). The growing influence of deepfakes in the hospitality sector (Tuomi, 2021) necessitates its inclusion among the sub-genres of fake news. Empirical research in the hospitality industry has predominantly focused on fake reviews (e.g., Hlee et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021), while a few studies have discussed conspiracy theories (Rietjens, 2019) and multimedia manipulation (Lazard et al., 2018). However, the rest of the sub-genres have received scant attention. To illustrate with an example, a satirical post was published in early 2021 alleging that Marriott had revoked the Texas senator's award points while he was on vacation in Mexico during the winter storm that his state's residents were battling (Hall, 2021).

However, this post was later clarified by the author as a satirical piece (Dunn, 2021). In a similar vein, clickbait advertising lures people to click links online and has been recognized as a form of deception (Chen et al., 2015). Events of this nature have the propensity to snowball into controversies but have largely remained underexplored in the extant literature.

6.2.3. Milieux of fake news engagement

Individuals draw upon heuristic reasoning as a means to process information, especially in the context of dealing with uncertainty (Kahan et al., 2010). Furthermore, people are also more likely to accept and pay attention to the content of such messages when heuristic reasoning signals that the information is reliable (Wang, 2021). Hence, we argue that heuristic cues play a crucial role in perceiving the authenticity of the content and is a precursor to the milieux of engaging with fake news.

6.2.3.1. Heuristic cues as the mediating factor. Extant research on fake news in the hospitality industry has extensively dealt with heuristic indicators to evaluate the credibility of content being consumed by individuals. In the context of linguistic features, individuals may rely on heuristic cues to process information and determine whether a review or message is credible or not (e.g., Ahmad and Sun, 2018), whereas several linguistic cues in messages such as social, affective, perceptual cues among others may also be indicative of falsehood (e.g., Li et al., 2020). Moreover, extreme messages, valence of reviews and emotional cues are increasingly indicative of fake news and reviews (e.g., Filieri, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). Beyond the linguistic aspects, nonverbal actions of those creating the message, such as social behaviors, may also be suggestive of fakery (e.g., Zhang et al., 2016), whereas personal identifiable information of reviewers may also influence the decision-making process of customers (e.g., Xie et al., 2011). Analysis of reviews also reveals that fraudulent reviews lack images and have a greater temporal

separation (e.g., Li et al., 2020). While several of these have been explored in specific demographic settings and in the context of fake reviews, we believe they merit further examination in the broader context of fake news in the hospitality industry.

6.2.3.2. Perceived authenticity of content. Prior literature suggests that trustworthiness of information is not an objective property, but rather the perception of the user (Tseng and Fogg, 1999). Prior studies have also analyzed how signals in the information environment influence perceptions of false information (e.g., Shen et al., 2019). In this context, fake news is a threat to individual and societal well-being to the degree that it encourages erroneous perceptions and decisions based on false beliefs (Southwell et al., 2018). Moreover, the authenticity of a product or event is usually staged (MacCannell, 1999) so that it conforms to a person's specific norms (Boorstin, 1971). Given individuals' preference for information that conforms to their preconceptions (Huang et al., 2012), perceived authenticity may influence the trust and behavioral intentions of individuals in the hospitality context (Kim and Kim, 2020), whereas if the perception of the authenticity of information begins to deteriorate, individuals may avoid it entirely (Banerjee, 2022) Consequently, we propose that it is this perception of authenticity that steers the behavior towards detecting or spreading fake news, or confronting its consequences.

6.2.3.3. Consequences of fake news. The implications of engaging with content of a false nature may be explored at the levels of individual, brand, and the society. For example, at the individual level, Wisker (2020) discusses hatred towards the brand and anger as consumers respond to fake news about foods that violate their moral code. In a similar vein, Kuo et al. (2015) discuss the anger and regret experienced by consumers when exposed to misleading photos of hotels then stayed in and highlight the propensity of such disgruntled consumers to spread negative electronic word of mouth (eWOM) online. Such unpleasant experiences could also translate to a loss of trust in the brand while also reducing the possibility of a repeat purchase intention by the consumer who has been a victim of fake news (Kuo et al., 2015). At the societal level, we notice online misinformation, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, to contribute to public panic, feelings of insecurity, and hoarding behavior in what may be termed as stockpiling (Charilaou and Vijaykumar, 2021). Hence, we include these in our framework as potential consequences at the societal level.

6.2.3.4. Dissemination of fake news. The spread of fake news can be executed through human spreaders or technological means. Prior studies suggest that hospitality businesses may engage the services of brand reputation management companies to generate favorable reviews for themselves while also coping with negative reviews (e.g., Moon et al., 2019). Furthermore, the human behavior to spread fake news may be intentional or inadvertent in nature (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2020). Extant literature also discusses the role of social bots in spreading content of low credibility (Shao et al., 2018). In a similar vein, echo chambers and filter bubbles have the potential to go about reinforcing false information through selective exposure (Berthon and Pitt, 2018; Spohr, 2017).

6.2.4. Moderation effects and control variables
Our framework emphasizes the necessity of examining the moderating impacts of certain variables at two stages in the context of creating and engaging with fake news. First, we anticipate that the sense of power of the agent fabricating the fake news will moderate the effect of incentives on the fabrication of fake news, while correlated variables such as self-importance and amount of dependence on others, which have been controlled in prior studies (e.g., Choi et al., 2017), also warrant consideration. Second, in the context of fake news engagement, several moderating variables related to the attributes of the consumer, the type

of medium and corrective messages are proposed as part of the framework and discussed here. The level of involvement, the experience with online customer reviews and type of website may have a bearing on how trustworthiness of messages is assessed by the consumer (e.g., Filieri, 2016), whereas corrective messages may also help mitigate the influence of fake news, particularly when conveyed by an expert source and with high social endorsements (e.g., Wang, 2021). Religiosity may play a significant role in sharing fake news (Talwar et al., 2020b), and has been found to moderate the effect of negative emotions such as anger on hostility towards brands in the context of fake news (e.g., Wisker, 2020). Therefore, we contend that the moderating effects of religious beliefs merit consideration. Similarly, brand trust, which represents a consumer's confidence in a particular brand (Chen and Cheng, 2019), has been discussed as a moderating variable in the context of purchase intentions and its impact on the inclination to believe and act on fake news (e.g., Kumar et al., 2021a) and hence warrants inclusion in the framework. Prior research finds interpersonal influences to mitigate how consumption of fake items are perceived by shoppers (e.g., Iyer et al., 2022) and hence, we include it in our framework as a variable which merits exploration. Based on prior studies, media literacy is expected to improve consumer awareness including self-verification prior to sharing (e.g., Soon, 2020) and hence, we content that it may reduce the propensity to disseminate fake news. Individuals with high cognitive abilities are known to make wise choices while interacting with fake news (Ahmed, 2021) and deepfake research discusses cognitive ability as a moderator in the context of social media use and purposeful sharing of deepfakes (Ahmed, 2022). Hence, we include this in our framework as a moderating variable. High levels of online trust encourages individuals to take risks and share information (Krasnova et al., 2010; Lin and Liu, 2012), thereby reducing the likelihood of authenticating such information, whereas self-disclosure promotes increased authentication prior to sharing information (Talwar et al., 2019), and hence these are included as variables in the framework.

The proposed model indicates the presence of numerous control variables in the context of fake news creation and engagement. Prior discussions on psychological cues within fake reviews have controlled for the effects of review rating, the length of the review, the reviewer's experience, and reputation (e.g., Li et al., 2020), whereas ratings of hotel property, its age, category, and location have been incorporated as controls in other studies on manipulated reviews (e.g., Mayzlin et al., 2014). Similarly, prior research evaluating consumers' perceptions of corrective messages in the context of genetically modified foods control for preexisting belief accuracy (e.g., Wang, 2021) while sociodemographic variables have consistently been incorporated as controls in discussions on believing and acting on fake news (e.g., Bezbaruah et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2021a). Therefore, our framework includes all of the aforementioned variables as controls.

6.3. Theme-based research agendas

This study, in addition to providing recommendations for addressing research gaps, identifies several research questions related to the four themes discussed earlier. (see Table S3 in supplementary material) presents a list of potential theme-based research questions which emerge on the basis of (a) findings and limitations in the extant literature summarized in (see Table S4 in supplementary material (b)) preceding discussions on future research areas and (c) the conceptual framework elaborated in this section. These research questions are expected to guide researchers in advancing the scholarly contributions towards fake news in the hospitality industry.

7. Implications of the study

Our review has implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, we make three contributions. First, we review the related literature on the phenomenon and synthesize the key

contributions made in the extant literature by organizing them under specific themes. Second, we provide a holistic understanding of the antecedents and consequences of fake news through a comprehensive framework that encompasses key elements in the fake news engagement process. In doing so, we not only summarize existing relationships discussed in literature but also highlight the elements which have largely remained underexplored. This should act as a foundation for scholars in the field to research on the phenomenon as it relates to the sector. Third, we highlight issues that dominate the extant literature and those that require due consideration. Addressing these gaps is of paramount importance for the advancement of theoretical and empirical research in the field of hospitality research.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of our study offer insights for multiple stakeholders, including hotel managers, tourism service providers and review platforms. First, our study underscores the need for hotel managers to not only monitor fake reviews but also provide timely responses to curb its cascading negative effects on businesses. Second, we offer crucial insights for hospitality businesses on how specific attributes such as photos of hotels and tourist destinations can affect consumers' perceptions and alter their trust in the brands. These insights should help businesses redesign their brand strategy to improve their brand positioning. Third, our discussion on the variety of linguistic cues that encompass fake news in hospitality businesses is a novel contribution to the armamentarium of techniques which are leveraged by data science practitioners who are engaged in the detection of fabricated reviews. In the long run, such a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and effective response measures can foster the development of hospitality businesses and guarantee the welfare of stakeholders involved in it.

8. Limitations

The findings which emerged from this review should be considered in the light of its limitations. First, this review was based on articles which were published in peer-reviewed journals available in select databases. This selection meant the exclusion of other forms of publications such as book chapters and conference papers. Second, we incorporated a diverse set of keywords and key phrases in our search protocol and further obtained additional studies through citation chaining. While this helps position our work as extensive and holistic in coverage, the evolving nature of fake news as a phenomenon and the dynamics of the hospitality industry may expand the horizons, which may be addressed by incorporating more relevant works in future studies. Nonetheless, our research draws insights from 51 journal articles that we believe is sufficient to provide in-depth perspectives of the literature on fake news in the hospitality industry.

9. Conclusion

In this study, we conducted a systematic review of literature on fake news in the hospitality industry. SLRs offer a reliable process for aggregating literature on a certain topic and identifying areas of investigation within and gaps in the extant literature (Khanra et al., 2020; Talwar et al., 2020a). This paper represents one of the first attempts to capture the state of the literature on fake news in the hospitality industry. In doing so, we were able to draw out a profile of studies, highlight the gaps in the extant literature and put forth a framework to advance the research agenda. There is a significant need for a foundation for theoretical interest around the phenomenon within the hospitality industry. In that context, we hope that this study will offer the necessary impetus to trigger discussions on matters related to fake news which has constantly marred hospitality businesses globally.

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Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103277.

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