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1 ABSTRACT

2 This study evaluated customer reviews about The Clink restaurants to understand how they are 3 rated and what experience is gained by fine dining in a prison. The Clink Charity runs training restaurants in four U.K. prisons and aims to change attitudes and transform lives through 4 5 prisoner rehabilitation. This research used an interpretive case study of the Clink restaurants to 6 evaluate online customer reviews posted on TripAdvisor. In total, 3951 reviews were analysed 7 using Leximancer 5.0. The most prominent themes were Food: 'fine-dining in prisons', Visit: 8 'The Clink ambassadors', and Prison: 'the inside and outside divide'. Despite the prison 9 location, customers reported having exceptional, professional and memorable dining experiences delivered by highly trained chefs, and that the front of house staff would rival those 10 11 in many fine-dining restaurants. Further research is required to confirm how dining at a Clink restaurant may have potentially begun to change the public perceptions of prisoners. 12

13

14 *Keywords*:

15 Prison, hospitality industry, training restaurants, Leximancer, TripAdvisor, customer reviews

16 **1. Introduction**

Representing about one-fifth of all employment opportunities in developed countries, the 17 hospitality industry is viewed as suitable for training and employment opportunities of 18 marginalised groups in society. There exists a vast range of hospitality training and 19 employment programmes worldwide aiming to help the marginalised populations transition 20 into the industry. These include programmes for prisoners (e.g., Beier, 2015), refugees (e.g., 21 22 Collins et al., 2017), and youth with disabilities (e.g., McIntosh and Harris, 2018), among others. They benefit training and/or employment schemes and hospitality management in 23 24 general, providing an alternate workforce amid issues of high staff turnover and staff shortages that characterise the industry (Meier, 1991). The schemes also engender wider societal impact; 25 for example, through transition planning, rehabilitation or reducing recidivism. In such cases, 26 27 hospitality is seen as a source for social good (Cockburn-Wootten et al., 2014).

This study focuses on a hospitality training programme provided in four United Kingdom 28 (U.K.) prisons. The Clink Charity U.K. was founded to reduce recidivism by breaking the cycle 29 of crime and changing public perceptions of prisoners, creating second chances, and 30 transforming lives (https://theclinkcharity.org/). It aims to do this through prisoner 31 32 rehabilitation initiatives provided in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison Service, including the operation of four restaurants in prison buildings: The Clink Restaurant High Down (the 33 34 first restaurant to open, in 2009), The Clink Cardiff (2012), The Clink Brixton (2014), and The Clink Styal (2015). Each Clink restaurant is a registered catering college that provides a 35 purposeful training environment in which prisoners can learn the self-discipline, skills, and 36 habits that will prepare them for hospitality employment once released. Clink 'graduates' have 37 found successful employment in hospitality establishments ranging from high street catering 38 firms to luxury hotels (Young, 2017). Furthermore, The Clink Charity (2021) has recorded a 39

40 65.6% reduction in reoffending among prisoner graduates from its hospitality training41 programmes.

The four Clink restaurants cater for 90–120 customers at a time in each restaurant. Prisoners 42 with six to eighteen months remaining on their sentences serve as volunteers in the restaurants 43 whilst undertaking full-time training toward hospitality qualifications. The restaurant menus 44 45 are comparable to those found in other stylish, modern fine-dining establishments, although alcohol cannot be served. The Clink restaurant at Brixton consistently ranks as one of the top-46 ten fine-dining restaurants in London on TripAdvisor (Thomas-Graham, 2019). There is thus 47 increasing knowledge of the success of The Clink training restaurants as dining establishments 48 and for prisoner rehabilitation through its focus on education and meaningful work. However, 49 little remains known about how customers rate and review their Clink restaurant experience 50 and the potential influence of the prison location on the dining experience. 51

With customer review being an essential element of any successful hospitality enterprise 52 53 (Pizam and Ellis, 1999), it is important to understand how well (or otherwise) The Clink restaurants are being experienced by their customers. For restaurant managers, favourable 54 online reviews posted by their customers can be used to increase product and brand awareness 55 and reputation, enhance customer relationships and loyalty, and improve their marketing and 56 57 public relations (Amaral et al., 2014). This study aims to therefore evaluate customer reviews 58 about The Clink restaurants to understand how they are rated and what experience is gained by fine dining in a prison. This will be done through an analysis of their overall ratings and 59 comments posted on the online review website, TripAdvisor. 60

61 The following section reviews the extant literature relevant to understanding prisons as62 hospitality training establishments, and how they may be reviewed online by diners. This is

63 followed by a discussion of the study method before presenting the findings and wider64 conclusions of the research.

65 **2.** Literature review

66 2.1 Prisons as hospitality establishments

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Prisons are increasingly seen as hospitality establishments. To date, hospitality, culinary arts, 68 69 and catering studies have featured prominently in the vocational qualifications and training offered in prisons (Goodger, 2003; Werblow and Dischino, 2015; Peled-Laskov and Timor, 70 2018). Previous studies have attested to the important role of vocational education and training 71 in prisons in the rehabilitation of adult prisoners and offenders, providing them with learning 72 and employment pathways which will support them economically and socially for life in 73 74 society once released (Dawe, 2007; Zirkle and Martin, 2012). Ex-offenders are seen as an alternate labour force for the hospitality industry (Meier, 1991), and the nature of the hospitality 75 industry itself - centred on customer interaction - is viewed as what is needed for prisoner 76 77 rehabilitation (Beier, 2015). Indeed, research reveals the potential of restaurant operations to 78 rehabilitate prisoners and reduce recidivism (Cale et al. 2018; Dawe, 2007; Werblow and Dischino, 2015). As already mentioned, The Clink Charity (2021) found a 65.6% reduction in 79 reoffending among its former prisoner graduates. The employment of former prisoners is also 80 seen as emancipatory for those individuals, allowing them to carve for themselves new social 81 roles for a better future once released (Beier, 2015; Chandra, 2017; Harkison and McIntosh, 82 83 2019).

With the objective to reduce high recidivism rates among ex-offenders, other prisons have
introduced their own hospitality training and rehabilitation enterprises. These include The
Verne – a jailhouse café in the U.K., the InGalera gourmet restaurant in Italy, The Fife and
Drum restaurant in the U.S., Restaurant Idlanathi in South Africa, restaurant INTERNO in

Columbia (Thomas-Graham, 2019) and the Gate to Plate event in New Zealand. In each of 88 these so-called 'social gastronomy' enterprises (Thomas-Graham, 2019), prisoners undertake 89 90 a hospitality-related qualification while serving their sentences and whilst having controlled contact with the public through the hospitality training enterprise. Ultimately, the success of 91 92 such enterprises is linked not just to the achievement of social objectives, but also to their economic business sustainability (Alegre and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). Dining in prisons 93 94 certainly has a novelty factor for customers (Harkison and McIntosh, 2019), yet little remains understood about the demand perspectives of in-prison restaurants in terms of customer 95 96 satisfaction and the success of such enterprises. It is therefore timely to understand how the customers of the in-prison dining initiatives rate and review their experiences. Although there 97 have been previous considerations of the success of tourist visits to prisons and prison museums 98 (e.g., Ross, 2012; Strange and Kempa, 2003), customer overall ratings and reviews of in-prison 99 restaurants have not previously been evaluated, nor have how those reviews may be shaped by 100 the restaurant's prison location. It is widely known that the success of a restaurant can be 101 attributed to its physical location, making the location an important strategic factor (Hanaysha, 102 2016; Yang et al., 2017). In the case of the four Clink restaurants, the location cannot be a 103 strategic choice since all are located within working prisons, making this unique location 104 worthy of investigation. 105

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107 2.2. TripAdvisor and online customer reviews of restaurants

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109 The analysis of online restaurant reviews is timely as they now play an important role when 110 consumers make their dining decisions (Cordato, 2014). Online social media has transformed 111 the way customers interact with the hospitality industry allowing access to the comments of 112 other consumers (Yilmaz, 2019). There are various online review platforms, including 113 community-based sites such as TripAdvisor and Yelp to transaction-based online travel

agencies such as Expedia and Booking.com, where reviews are incorporated as electronic 114 word-of-mouth (Gligorijevic, 2016). Whilst the trustworthiness of such online reviews has 115 previously been questioned (Cordato, 2014; Coursaris et al., 2017), not only have online 116 consumer reviews been shown to provide an important source of information to advise 117 customer decision-making and purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2017); the reviews may also 118 be used by hospitality management to evaluate overall customer satisfaction. TripAdvisor has 119 120 been heralded as the most popular website on the internet for consumers to publish their overall ratings and reviews of restaurants, as well as of hotels, resorts, and tourist attractions (Cordato, 121 122 2014). It is a common source of information regarding customer attitudes and opinions about a tourism or hospitality product (Tseng et al., 2015). 123

Whilst the majority of previous hospitality research has evaluated online reviews for hotels 124 (e.g., Khoo et al., 2017; Sparks and Browning, 2011; Zhang and Verma, 2017), some studies 125 have examined the use of TripAdvisor for restaurant decision-making. Previous research has 126 127 shown that customers select restaurants based on aspects such as quality of food; the ambience or location of the restaurant; price, value, and service; food availability; and tourists' own food 128 culture (Hwang et al., 2012; Mak et al., 2012; Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Yilmaz, 2019). Indeed, 129 restaurant choice is affected by both tangible (e.g., food and table aspects) and intangible 130 aspects of restaurant attributes (e.g., value, atmosphere, service). For food aficionados, online 131 132 peer reviews of restaurants are argued to be particularly important in selecting restaurants in which to dine (Rhee et al., 2015). 133

While the information on restaurant decision-making is important, there remains a gap in understanding how particular types of restaurants are rated and reviewed by customers. In particular, whilst some previous studies have found the location and place of the restaurant to be influential in decision-making (e.g., Hwang et al., 2012; Sulek and Hensley, 2004), the prison location of a restaurant has rarely been examined. Furthermore, in respect of online reviews or restaurants, it is important to note that the multiple criteria used by customers to
choose a satisfactory restaurant may not always reflect the criteria that online review platforms
ask customers to review (Zhang et al., 2017). For instance, TripAdvisor.com requires
customers to rate only four criteria overall: a restaurant's service, food, value, and atmosphere
not their location.

144 In addition to their numerical rating of these four criteria overall, customers may post a summary of their experience, identify the type, date, and purpose of their visit, recommend 145 particular dishes, and share photos of their dining experience. In this way, text reviews can 146 reveal more nuanced details of customers' experiences and attitudes beyond mere numerical 147 ratings (Zhang et al., 2017). That said, many working prisons prohibit the possession of 148 cameras and mobile phones during dining, meaning that customers are often not able to take 149 photos of their experience. Also, being served by prison inmates, the prohibition of alcohol, 150 and the important security check required of diners entering prisons similarly make the prison 151 152 dining experience somewhat unique compared to other restaurant types. As such, this study contributes to hospitality management research by revealing the nature of customers' overall 153 ratings and reviews of the four Clink restaurants as fine-dining hospitality establishments inside 154 working prisons. 155

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157 **3. Study methods**

An interpretive, qualitative case-study methodology was deemed appropriate to evaluate customer restaurant reviews. This approach is useful where the examination of the context and the dynamics of the research situation is important, such as in the unique context of prison dining (Darke et al., 1998; Marshall and Rossman, 2010). The data were collected via a secondary data source: the TripAdvisor website, representing the largest online travel

community in the world, with more than 35 million visitors per month. This website was chosen 163 above others as it is deemed the most popular site on which consumers publish their ratings 164 and reviews of restaurants (Cordato, 2014). It contains more than 45 million reviews and 165 opinions on more than 1.3 million hotels, restaurants, and attractions (TripAdvisor, 2019). 166 TripAdvisor is a platform of public information that can be used by researchers to explore the 167 168 non-commercial, user-generated, and peer-to-peer nature of the reviews (Cong et al., 2014). 169 However, the limitations include subjectivity and a lack of background information on the reviewer and the context (Ayeh et al., 2013). 170

In total, 3951 TripAdvisor reviews (a total of 394,650 words) in English of all four Clink 171 restaurants were analysed using the Leximancer 5.0 software between June 2011 (when the 172 first restaurant was opened) and 15 October 2019 (when data analysis started). The following 173 inclusion criterion was used: only customer reviews in English were analysed. When 174 downloading the customer reviews from TripAdvisor, four reviews were discarded from the 175 176 total because one was written in Chinese, and three others were related to different restaurants outside of our sample. The Leximancer software helps to explore a large amount of text and 177 visually produces themes and concepts in a conceptual map (Chiu and Leng, 2017; Wu et al., 178 179 2017). It is very useful in exploratory studies which analyse big data and where the key concepts may not be clear without researchers' active intervention (Wilk et al., 2019), such as 180 181 the analysis of inbound tourists' complaints (Liu and Li, 2019).

Leximancer uses a quantitative approach to carry out a qualitative analysis of the text (Tseng et al., 2015). It generates themes and concepts; the themes emerge from the co-occurrence of terms rather than being imposed by the researcher's classification, enabling a more exploratory style to represent the most prominent concepts (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). Unlike other qualitative data management software such as CATPAC, NVivo and ATLAS.ti, Leximancer does not code by frequency of word, term or phrase. Instead, it is used to look for the meaning, concepts and

ideas within the textual data creating visual concept maps to help provide greater insights into 188 the meaning of language (Tseng et al., 2015). Leximancer algorithms extract semantic and 189 relational information leading to the formation of concepts through word association from 190 "terms that indicate meaning around a word" (Harwood et al., 2013: 1032). Then, through a 191 conceptual analysis, the semantic meaning is created (Harwood et al., 2013). Leximancer does 192 not capture the communication style of online reviews (Wilk et al., 2019) but it was the most 193 194 suitable software for this qualitative study as it allowed the researchers to focus on the meaning in the reviews by extracting concepts and ideas (Tseng et al., 2015). The researchers played an 195 196 important role in the second stage of data analysis, creating further meaning and insights, rather than simply reporting the outcomes of the software analysis (Harwood et al., 2013). 197

The overall ratings of The Clink restaurants (i.e. service, food, value and atmosphere) were 198 extracted from TripAdvisor. Then, the qualitative customer reviews were copied from 199 TripAdvisor and entered into the Leximancer software for analysis. The software identified 200 five main themes (a theme is named after the most prominent concept), one name-like concept 201 - 'Clink', and 72 word-like concepts (the words most frequently occurring) - such as 'service', 202 'professional', and 'charity' (Wilk et al., 2019). To ensure the validity of the conceptual map 203 204 and reliability of data analysis (Wu et al., 2017), the five themes were reviewed multiple times by the authors to ensure the clear meaning of each theme and subsequent concepts. This 205 206 resulted in three most prominent themes: 'food', 'visit' and 'prison', and their relevant concepts. This study used the default Leximancer settings to generate the results but employed 207 the 'concept merge' function so similar concepts such as 'course'/ 'courses' were grouped. 208

Findings from The Clink restaurant TripAdvisor ratings and the most prominent themes of thedining experience, arising from the data analysis, are presented below.

212 4. Findings and Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate customer reviews about The Clink restaurants to understand how 213 214 they are rated and what experience is gained by fine dining in a prison. Data analysis revealed that the restaurants are ranked highly on TripAdvisor, with Brixton ranked number 20 out of 215 216 16,740 restaurants in London; Cardiff – 9th out of 811; Styal – 1st out of 71 restaurants in Wilmslow; and High Down ranked 1st out of 126 restaurants in Sutton. Only 3% of reviewers 217 rated the restaurants 3 out of a maximum of 5 stars ('average' or below), with 0.4% of reviews 218 being 1 star ('terrible'). The high ratings were consistent across the four restaurants (see Table 219 220 1). Where the restaurants were rated as 'terrible' or 'poor' (1 or 2 stars), reviewers commented on either the poor food quality or poor communication regarding the booking system (for 221 security reasons a table needs to be pre-booked). Almost all of the negative comments were 222 responded to online by the restaurant managers. 223

		Number of ratings for each restaurant 2020					
Rating		Brixton	Cardiff	Styal	High Down	Total	%
5*	Excellent	755	1,369	810	329	3263	82.6
4*	Very good	144	236	110	80	570	14.4
3*	Average	11	38	20	13	82	2.1
2*	Poor	1	13	5	3	22	0.6
1*	Terrible	1	8	3	2	14	0.4
						3951	100.0

Table 1: Customer star ratings on TripAdvisor for four Clink restaurants

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High ratings by restaurant customers are important because customer satisfaction is an essential
element of any hospitality enterprise (Pizam and Ellis, 1999). Furthermore, our study found
that the positive ratings of the restaurants were similarly evident in the favourable and often

detailed reviews posted on TripAdvisor. There is some evidence therefore that points to theunique and memorable impact of the restaurant visit on the reviewers.

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232 4.1 Leximancer generated themes and relevant concepts

233	The five most significant themes generated by Leximancer 5.0, ranked in descending order to
234	their relative importance were: 'food', 'visit', 'prison', 'alcohol' and 'main' (see Table 3) with
235	their respective number of 'hits' or counts (meaning the number of text blocks in the project
236	associated with the theme) set at the high detail level, as shown in Table 2.

237 **Table 2:** The five most common themes found in TripAdvisor reviews of Clink restaurants

Theme	Number of hits
Food	11,100
Visit	5794
Prison	4245
Alcohol	3105
Main	1865

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These are also shown within the conceptual 'heat-mapped' map below (Figure 1), where hot colours (red, yellow, and green) denote the most important themes, and cool colours (blue and purple) denote the less important themes. The size of each bubble does not denote the significance of each theme but rather the significance of the relationship between the relevant concepts (Wilk et al., 2019).





To describe the five main themes, Table 3 outlines the concepts relevant to each of the themes, illustrated using one example of a customer review from the TripAdvisor data. The five themes were perhaps to be expected given that aspects such as food, drink, and service are common to comments made by restaurant customers on TripAdvisor (see Sulek and Hensley, 2004). Whilst other TripAdvisor studies show the significance of place/location in restaurant reviews (see Zhang et al., 2017), it is notable here that comments relating to prison/prisoner appeared in the key theme ('prison') alongside another key concept, *place*.

253 Table 3. Five significant themes and associated concepts

Theme	Concepts	Example review
'food'	food, service, restaurant, lunch, staff,	The menu is actually very nice and the
	experience, Clink, presented, excellent,	food was extremely well presented ()
	beautifully, friendly, meal, delicious,	we had a delicious meal nicely served by
	lovely, menu, time, served, attentive,	a very competent waiter.
	amazing, course, quality, cooked, waiter, professional, atmosphere, table, nice, restaurants, chapel, kitchen	(Brixton Reviewer)
'visit'	visit, recommend, worth, book, take	We will certainly return and recommend it to anyone else
'visit'	visit, recommend, worth, book, take	We will certainly return and it to anyone else (Styal Reviewer

'prison'	prison, place, charity, prisoners, dining, friends, work, visited, security, people, inmates, inside, training, outside	This is a fantastic charity which does so much to give prisoners the second chance they often deserve. I am looking forward to visiting The Clink again.
		(High Down Reviewer)
'alcohol'	alcohol, best, birthday, evening, tea, dinner, breakfast, day, down	With no alcohol to inflate your bill there is an incentive to be generous.
		(Cardiff Reviewer)
'main'	main, tasty, courses, dessert, starter, lamb, chocolate, cream, ice, beef, chicken, cheese, dish, toffee, soup	What a pleasant surprise. My Fig and Gorgonzola tart tatin was delicious but the chocolate dessert with damson ice cream was truly amazing.
		(Brixton Reviewer)

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The conceptual map in Figure 1 shows a significant overlap between 'food' and the third most prominent theme of 'prison'. By adjusting the number of visible concepts from 0% to 4%, the relationship between these two themes is displayed as a knowledge pathway (Figure 2). The software registered the strongest pathway between these themes and the knowledge pathway was from 'food' (the most important theme and concept) to *service*, *restaurant*, and 'prison'. Such a pathway illustrates stories from the text and demonstrates indirect connections between concepts (Tseng et al., 2015).





It is apparent that the five themes, together with the related concepts, are all representative of 264 reviewers' positive comments about dining in the four Clink restaurants. The quality and the 265 presentation of different dishes as well as the level of service were highly regarded and worthy 266 of comment, even though only non-alcoholic beverages may be served in a prison environment. 267 268 The conceptual map shows that the theme of 'food' was central to the content of The Clink reviews. In addition, it shows a significant overlap between 'food' and the third most prominent 269 theme of 'prison'. This might not be surprising given the distinctive location of the restaurants 270 and is worthy of further exploration. 271

272 4.2. The three most prominent themes and relevant concepts

After several reviews of the five main themes, the three most prominent themes were chosen for further analysis ('food', 'visit', 'prison'), since the theme of 'alcohol' was about the nonalcohol policy in the restaurants, and theme of 'main' was used to describe different types of dishes reviewers commented on, as shown in Table 3. As illustrated in Figure 1, the themes of 'alcohol' and 'main' overlapped with the theme of 'food', meaning they had multiple concepts
in common. In addition, as can be seen in Figure 3, both themes had strong relationships with
the theme of 'food'.





Figure 3: The relationship between the theme of 'food', and sub-themes of 'main' and 'alcohol'

Cheng and Edwards (2019) recommend that researchers map themes and concepts to higher theoretical knowledge and assess their usefulness to the research aim. Accordingly, the themes of 'main' and 'alcohol' were analysed as significant sub-themes together with the theme of 'food' based on the overlap between their concepts.

The following sections further discuss the three main themes ('food', 'visit' and 'prison') that emerged from data analysis. These three themes are elaborated on below under the expanded thematic titles of 'fine dining in prisons', 'The Clink ambassadors', and 'the inside and outside divide' to more richly describe the qualitative nature of the dining experiences.

291 *4.2.1 Food: Fine-dining in prisons*

The first and most significant theme of 'food' was made up of 29 word-like concepts and two sub-themes of 'alcohol' and 'main' and their related concepts (see Table 3). As such, the first theme, expanded to be called 'fine-dining in prisons', can best be described as relating to the quality of food, service, reasons for the visit, and the no-alcohol policy. Also, this theme denotes that all four Clink restaurants are considered as fine-dining restaurants despite them being located inside prisons.

Figure 4 shows how Leximancer displayed the conceptual structure of the 'food' theme, made up of the most significant concept, *food*, which was predominantly about food quality and service.



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Figure 4: Conceptual structure of text for the concept of *food*.

The high quality of food (comparable to Michelin star dining) was reported by reviewers, including types of dishes they particularly enjoyed, as well as their presentation. The sub-theme of 'main' consists of concepts depicting different types of food as listed in Table 3 and illustrated in the following reviews.

308 309	What a great meal! We have eaten in Michelin star restaurants and I can honestly say that this was comparable. (Cardiff Reviewer)
310 311	I had an amazing roast beef main course with a large Yorkshire pudding, two sorts of potatoes and a separate dish of vegetables. (Styal Reviewer)
312	Reviewers praised the high quality of 'food' served in these training restaurants which illustrate
313	that working prisons are successful hospitality establishments despite their unique location.
314 315 316	Rehabilitation – New chances – Go for it. Feel-good experience while enjoying superbly cooked and presented food. Great value. And it's not just about supporting a good cause, you will appreciate the quality as well. (High Down Reviewer)
317 318 319	Excellent meal with very attractively presented dishes, cooked well and very tasty. Overall a good dining experience. A very professional restaurant worth more than one second visit. (Styal Reviewer)
320	Reviewers also shared their opinions about the professional, friendly, and attentive service
321	delivered by the professional front of house staff (the prisoners). The reviewers suggest that
322	the prisoners are no longer seen as inmates, but as highly trained hospitality workers.
323 324 325	My wife and I had an unbelievable experience. From the moment you walk in, the welcome is superb and all staff who served us were attentive, friendly and professional. (Cardiff Reviewer)
326 327 328 329	Fabulous food and fabulous service, () would not be out of place in a Michelin starred restaurant. No wonder it's in the top ten restaurants in the U.K. (Cardiff Reviewer)
330 331	Upon entering, you'd never think this was run by female inmates. It was so professional, extremely clean and very well laid out. (Styal Reviewer)
332	The above comments illustrate that despite the four restaurants being training restaurants, the
333	quality of service and food is exceptional and worthy of any non-training, fine-dining
334	restaurant.
335	Reviewed as quality fine-dining establishments, their prison locations, with restrictive security

336 access, also appeared important in reviewers' comments. Indeed, other TripAdvisor studies

- have confirmed the significance of location in restaurant reviews (see Zhang et al., 2017).
- Reviewers commented on the reasons for visiting the restaurants mostly birthday celebrations
- and (workplace) Christmas parties, which resulted in a unique/ memorable experience.
- I took my wife to prison to celebrate her birthday!! We had a wonderful experience
 despite the extra security to get in, plastic cutlery and no alcohol! (High Down
 Reviewer)
- My friend took me here for my birthday. I wanted to do something different and had seen it mentioned on the TV. It was a bit weird going through the Gates and into the prison but once inside the restaurant, it was so lovely. You would never realise that you were in a prison apart from the Wardens walking around outside. (Brixton Reviewer)
- What a fab experience! I decided to treat my mum and her partner to a meal here for
 their Christmas present. (High Down Reviewer)
- 350 The physical environment of the restaurants was discussed in the reviews often with a tone of
- 351 surprise, including the décor, furniture, and artwork.
- Restaurant environment clean, welcoming, comfortable, has great artwork by prison inmates, tables and chairs made in prison workshops, modern well furnished toilets, visitors book for comments: we LOVED IT!!! (Brixton Reviewer)
- 355
- 356 *Magnificent restaurant. Great ambience, mood lighting, lovely decor! Doesn't look*357 *anything like a prison.* (High Down Reviewer)
- 358 This positive evaluation of the physical environment was not overshadowed by strict security
- 359 measures. As they are dining in a working prison, visitors to the Clink restaurants must leave
- their phones and cameras outside, eat with plastic cutlery, and there is a no alcohol policy.
- 361 These measures were considered by the reviewers as a necessity and something to be expected.
- We loved our unique visit to The Clink and cannot wait to visit again. Don't be put off by the plastic cutlery and lack of alcohol (the cutlery is thick and durable and there are a range of non-alcoholic cocktails!) and pay the restaurant a visit ASAP. (High Down Reviewer)

366The only clue that we were inside a prison was the plastic cutlery. The decor was367fantastic and looked just like a very nice restaurant. (Brixton Reviewer)

Reviewers also described the atmosphere of the restaurants as relaxed and friendly, created by professional staff and a welcoming physical environment. Given the location of the restaurants and the stigma of the staff, this is a surprising finding but one that potentially points to the effective business model, which replicates almost completely a traditional restaurant environment.

Nothing was too much trouble and the atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming. (Cardiff
Reviewer)

375The food, atmosphere and service were impressive, it was a very relaxing enjoyable376night. (Styall Reviewer)

377 *A happy and joyful atmosphere and a unique experience.* (Brixton Reviewer)

378 *Great food and atmosphere, lovely ambiance.* (High Down Reviewer)

The no alcohol policy based on the sub-theme of 'alcohol' is apparent in the reviews in two ways. Firstly, reviewers wanted to remind future diners of this policy to level their expectations. Secondly, the reviewers justified this policy sharing in their reviews that, due to the professionally cooked and served food, the lack of alcohol was no detriment to their overall positive experience of dining in the restaurant. Indeed, the recent growing trend for nonalcoholic beverages supports this necessary safety restriction in the context of The Clink restaurants.

The food, service and presentation was better than some West End restaurants. As it
is in a Prison there is no alcohol and the cutlery is plastic. Will certainly be returning.
(Brixton Reviewer)

5 stars for service and food quality. Would have got 6 stars but no alcohol and plastic
knives and forks prohibited that. Under the circumstances you can understand why.
Great to help others retrain so they can get a job in the future. (High Down
Reviewer)

394 Sunday lunch yesterday was outstanding, all three courses were served with no less

than 5 star plus, the waiting staff and the kitchen staff certainly know what they're 395 doing, we didn't miss having a glass of wine with our meal as the mocktail was 396 delicious, the restaurant and staff are worth more than five stars, will be going again 397 and have already recommended it, a wonderful experience overall. (Cardiff Reviewer) 398 399 The theme of 'food' was also illustrated by the reviews which emphasised how the dining 400 experience contributed to the positive overall experience of visiting one of the restaurants. 401 Diners wrote about having a unique, memorable experience, which was based on an 402 opportunity to visit a prison to celebrate a birthday or attend a Christmas party, providing them 403 with a 'wow' factor. 404

405 Experience worth having! It started as a different idea: "Lets go to prison for lunch"!
406 Wow! Really? We can do that?! (...) And so we did! (Brixton Reviewer)
407 A modern immaculately maintained restaurant serving a variety of meals. The food
408 was superb, well presented and served by friendly and helpful staff making it a
409 memorable event. (Cardiff Reviewer)

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411 *4.2.2 Visit: The Clink ambassadors*

The second most prominent theme 'visit' was about reviewers highly recommending others to visit one of the restaurants. As such, this theme was expanded to be called 'The Clink ambassadors'. The related concepts (see Table 3) form the structure of the discussion of these findings. Specifically, Figure 5 shows how Leximancer displayed the conceptual structure of the 'visit' theme, made up of the most significant concept, *visit*, which was particularly connected to concepts of *worth* and *recommend*. These denoted the restaurants as worth visiting and being highly recommended to others.

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420



428 Figure 5: Conceptual structure of text for the concept *visit*.

The reviews revealed that reviewers made two different sets of recommendations for the 'visit'
in their postings. Firstly, and most importantly, they recommended others to visit one of the
restaurants.

432 *The whole experience was fantastic from arrival to departure, the staff, food and* 433 *service was excellent and this place is certainly worth a visit.* (Cardiff Reviewers)

434 *We will certainly return and recommend it to anyone else.* (Styal Reviewer)

435 *This is our third visit and I highly recommend it.* (Brixton Reviewer)

436 Secondly, the reviews often included practical recommendations on booking a table in advance,

437 mainly for security reasons, since all restaurant customers are required to include valid

- 438 identification when booking and then present it on the day of their visit.
- To indulge yourself and it really is an experience with gastronomic fare, you do need
 to book in advance be vetted and take ID. (Brixton Reviewer)
- 441 Also, reviewers posted the items not allowed in the prisons and gave instructions on where to
- leave them before entering the restaurant premises. They also provided details on which buses

to take to get to the prisons and the locations of the free car parks, as the review belowillustrates.

- You can reach it by the number 6 bus from Cardiff Bay next to the Millennium Centre
 or same bus from Cardiff Centre in front of the Marriott among many other stations.
 Train from Central Station Cardiff to Queen St Station takes 3 minutes and is another
 option. (Cardiff Reviewer)
- Reviews about the 'visit' also reveal comments relating to the work of The Clink charity firsthand; notably, comments about how the work of the charity plays a major role in changing
 public perceptions regarding prisoners' rehabilitation. The reviews below give examples to
 illustrate this.
- Very interesting to see how they try to rehabilitate prisoners with this scheme. We had
 a beautiful lunch and so well looked after. The boys that served us very nice and
 excited for their future now that they've had this experience. Excellent idea. No
 hesitation in recommending this place to anyone excellent food and service. The
 manager told us that the national reoffending rate is 44% but when they're on this
 rehabilitation course it is 12% (Cardiff Reviewer)
- Great food. I visited The Clink on Friday with my wife. We decided to go as we think
 the concept is great, prisons definitely need more schemes like this to rehabilitate the
 offenders. (Brixton Reviewer)
- 462 It is not every day that you get to dine in a category 'C' prison but I can strongly
 463 recommend it. A great concept where training and rehabilitation are the key drivers
 464 here- they deliver excellent quality food in a relatively relaxed environment. Well
 465 worth supporting. (Brixton Reviewer)
- By sharing their reviews on TripAdvisor, there is some evidence to suggest that the restaurant customers become more than reviewers; they potentially become ambassadors for The Clink. As such, the positive reviews of the fine-dining establishments, as well as the supportive comments on the purpose of The Clink charity, are worthy of future research to gauge how this may potentially influence the intentions of future customers as possible future ambassadors for the charity. Indeed, the unique experience of fine-dining in a prison with a social purpose offers the opportunity for ephemeral experiences that engender not only "authenticity, individuality,

and (...) personal positioning in the realm of the fascinating" (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie,
2019: 115), but also herald an important social purpose. Customers want their dining
experiences to contribute to their social capital, to build memories, and to add to their cultural
awareness and even character, as well as identity. The ultimate souvenir in collecting unique/
memorable experiences is the lasting memory (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2019).

478 *4.2.3 Prison: The inside and outside divide*

The third and final theme, 'prison', denotes the unusual location of the restaurants in prison
buildings, and as part of The Clink charity's prisoner rehabilitation programme (see Table 3
for related concepts). This theme thus engenders a potential 'inside and outside divide'.

Figure 6 shows how Leximancer displayed the conceptual structure of the 'prison' theme, made up of the most significant concept, *prison*. Unlike the other two themes ('food' and 'visit'), the concepts related to *prison* were evenly distributed with the concept, *courses*, being the most important. This further demonstrates the significant positive relationship between the restaurants being located in prisons and the food served there. This is exampled in the customer reviews below.

488 *Very impressed. Recommended by a friend. Really enjoyed the whole experience, from* 489 *visiting a prison to delicious three course meal.* (High Down Reviewer)

490 *4 course meal prep'd and served by serving prisoners on licence from the prison next*491 *door.* (High Down Reviewer)

492 Figure 5 shows how Leximancer displayed the conceptual structure of the 'visit' theme, made
493 up of the most significant concept, *visit*, which was particularly connected to concepts of *worth*494 and *recommend* denoting the restaurants as worth visiting and highly recommended to others.

495



Figure 6: Conceptual structure of text for the concept of *prison*.

The concept of *place* refers to a restaurant for the public located in a prison and staffed by prisoners, being where the two worlds meet: the inside and the outside. Prison may be initially considered 'the inside', since it is the location of the four restaurants, which are inside the prisons' walls. By entering 'the inside', customers get an insight into how the prison functions. Also, once inside the restaurant premises, one becomes immersed in a fine-dining setting.

509Once inside it is like any other restaurant. A nice set up with a lively atmosphere, with510quiet music in the background. Service by the staff was great. (Brixton Reviewer)

511 Top Notch Restaurant in unique surroundings as this is situated inside Highdown
512 prison walls, the food was excellent and well presented and cooked to perfection.
513 (Brixton Reviewer)

However, for the prisoners, the restaurants are 'the outside'. Working there equips them with catering and life skills and allows them the opportunity to engage with the general public as an opportunity to gain confidence before release and integration back into society. The benefits of interaction with the public before release is a finding echoed in previous research (see Peled-Laskov and Timor, 2018). Therefore, the restaurants not only prepare them for the life outside with the help of the mentoring programme but also give them a taste of that life whilst still inside the prison. This inside/ outside dichotomy is explained by reviewers. Reviewers
commented on the transition between the physical environments of the prisons and the
restaurant premises.

The usual prison security arrangements apply but this information is given to you
beforehand. We were escorted inside and accompanied into a very modern restaurant
that would not be out of place in a city environment. (High Down Reviewer)

Entrance to the prison is via a "Vacuum" type arrangement whereby you go through
one set of doors and are blocked from going in to the actual prison by a second set,
which are only opened once the first set are firmly closed. Once inside it is an
enclosed world, completely cut off from the outside and, I thought, quite similar to a
boarding school atmosphere. (Brixton Reviewer)

Therefore, The Clink charity re-educates both the public and the prisoners in a unique 531 environment. As such, hospitality is potentially confirmed as a source for social good 532 (Cockburn-Wootten et al., 2014). This knowledge exchange is possible because the concept of 533 a fine-dining training restaurant has been applied successfully to an irregular location such as 534 a prison. Such a symbiotic relationship, driven by The Clink, and based on educating the 535 prisoners and the public alike, may be supported by the concept of hospitality and 536 hospitableness where the offer of hospitality is reciprocated, also building the social capital of 537 538 customers. Centred on customer interaction, the nature of the hospitality industry is viewed as an ideal environment for prisoner rehabilitation (Beier, 2015). Indeed, data analysis showed 539 540 that reviewers do hold awareness of the purpose behind the fine-dining restaurants, as the following comments illustrate. 541

- 542 The charity helps offenders break the cycle of crime by nurturing self belief, workplace
 543 skills and offering nationally recognised qualifications. (Styal Reviewer)
- 544 They [prisoners] do not receive a penny in wages or tips. All monies go to the charity
 545 to rehabilitate those from prison into a job. Their success stories are amazing.
 546 (Cardiff Reviewer)

547 I also would like to congratulate the clink charity initiative which helps in transforming
548 prisoner's life . I would recommend this place to anyone who would love to have a great
549 meal with fantastic hospitality. (Brixton Reviewer)

550 The potential of restaurant operations to rehabilitate prisoners and reduce recidivism has been the subject of previous studies (e.g., Cale et al., 2018; Dawe, 2007; Werblow and Dischino, 551 2015), and is evidenced in the significant reduction in reoffending among The Clink Charity 552 (2021) 'graduates'. These initiatives may also change public opinion of prisoners who may 553 otherwise remain stigmatised, a topic worthy for future research. However, despite customers 554 praising the work The Clink is doing as a charity, analysis of the reviews revealed that 555 exceptional food and professional service offered in the four restaurants are the aspects most 556 commented on, as the following review demonstrates. 557

- Forget the fact that it's set up as a charity and run by prisoners and you're eating in
 HMP Cardiff. This is a serious restaurant producing excellent food from scratch that's
 very well presented and great value. (Cardiff Reviewer)
- 561

562 *4.2.4 Discussion*

The topic of training restaurants, notably those based within prisons, has not previously been 563 investigated in the field of hospitality research. Yet, the unique prison location of all four Clink 564 restaurants was frequently mentioned by reviewers as having a positive impact on their overall 565 dining experience even though the physical location is not rated as an important characteristic 566 by TripAdvisor. Despite being training restaurants, customers praised the high quality of food 567 in terms of presentation, quality and professional attentive service in their online reviews. 568 Customers also commented on the welcoming, relaxed and friendly atmosphere they 569 experienced during their visits. These are significant findings for these four training restaurants 570 staffed by prisoners and located within working prisons. Prisoners staffing the restaurants were 571 no longer considered as inmates but rather as trainee hospitality employees capable of 572 delivering outstanding service, which further highlights the potential success of vocational 573

training in reducing reoffending (Cale et al., 2018). This also supports the findings by Peled-574 Laskov and Timor (2018) who concluded that the opportunity for employment alongside 575 gaining soft skills positively contributes to prisoners' self-image, self-respect and confidence. 576 Prisoners also start to perceive themselves as providing social and financial benefits to the 577 wider economy which is reflected in their renewed sense of purpose and a desire to serve others 578 through offering hospitality. The employment of former prisoners is also seen as emancipatory 579 580 for those individuals, allowing them to carve for themselves new social roles for a better future once released (Beier, 2015; Chandra, 2017; Harkison and McIntosh, 2019). 581

582 Ultimately, it appears that these restaurants can deliver excellent restaurant food and service in a similar manner to restaurants not located within the confines of a prison setting. Therefore, 583 the restaurants are classed as fine-dining hospitality businesses offering memorable food and 584 dining experiences on par with Michelin-starred restaurants, evidenced by the overall ranking 585 of those restaurants on TripAdvisor. Excellent fine-dining in a prison, although an oxymoron, 586 is an important and successful outcome of The Clink Charity's work, alongside the 587 achievement of reducing the reoffending rates of prisoners. What is considered to be a hostile 588 and unwelcoming penal environment has become a destination for a culinary experience. Thus, 589 the prison location and The Clink Charity's prisoner rehabilitation purpose, although 590 significant, were not the determining factors for dining in those restaurants, according to 591 customer reviews. That said, the customers who enjoyed dining in the restaurants potentially 592 593 became The Clink's unofficial ambassadors, carefully detailing their experiences and recommending others to visit. Practical information, including the process of security checks, 594 was also shared by guests whose enthusiasm and support for this charity was evident in their 595 reviews. 596

597 The dichotomy of 'the inside' and 'the outside' is another significant finding from this study.598 It demonstrates that customers get an insight into how a working prison functions. For the

prisoners themselves, the restaurants are a glimpse of their life post-release. As mentioned 599 earlier, the potential of restaurant operations to rehabilitate prisoners by reducing stigma, 600 601 equipping them with social and life skills, leading to a reduction in recidivism, has been the subject of previous studies (e.g., Cale et al., 2018; Dawe, 2007; Werblow and Dischino, 2015). 602 Therefore, hospitality is seen as an important industry to support prisoner rehabilitation and 603 provide the necessary social and life skills (Beier, 2015). Working there allows prisoners the 604 605 opportunity to engage with the general public and gain confidence for a successful integration back into society, whilst also providing them with hospitality management and life skills; a 606 607 success mirrored in previous international research (Werblow and Dischino, 2015; Peled-Laskov and Timor, 2018). Therefore, The Clink Charity becomes the bridge that links these 608 two separate worlds together by (re)educating prisoners using the concept of the training 609 610 restaurant and, in the process, reducing reoffending rates.

611

612 **5.** Conclusion

613

This study aimed to evaluate customer reviews about The Clink restaurants to understand how 614 they are rated and what experience was gained by fine dining in a prison. Findings of 615 customers' online reviews about the four Clink training restaurants using data collected from 616 3951 TripAdvisor reviews were analysed. All four restaurants received high customer ratings, 617 as has been evidenced previously among TripAdvisor ratings for the Brixton restaurant 618 (Young, 2017). The extent and detail of the reviews have likely contributed to this outstanding 619 result for what is a training restaurant. Five significant themes were generated by Leximancer 620 621 5.0 software and from those, the three most prominent themes, namely, 'food', 'visit', and 622 'prison', were analysed due to their significant interrelationship. These findings yield both theoretical and practical implications which will now be discussed. 623

624 5.1 Theoretical implications

625

626 The topic of training restaurants has rarely been researched in the field of hospitality research, notably those based within working prisons. As such, our research contributes new insights 627 into the influence of the training restaurants' prison location on customer experiences through 628 analysis of their online reviews. Given the positive reviews about the prisoner staff, our study 629 also provides empirical support for ex-offenders as a potential alternate labour force for the 630 631 hospitality industry. This research has further theoretical significance because online restaurant reviews (such as those on TripAdvisor) play an important role when consumers make their 632 dining decisions. In the case of The Clink restaurants, findings from our research show that 633 634 dining within a prison is not only a memorable and enjoyable dining experience but may also potentially help to change negatively stereotyped perceptions of inmates. 635

636

637 *5.2 Practical implications*

638

639 It can be seen that the Clink model works, not only as a dining experience for customers, but research shows that it has contributed to reducing reoffending (The Clink Charity, 2021). The 640 Charity could franchise its model to other prisons in the U.K. and around the world. The 641 642 principles, practices, blueprint, standards of procedure of how to run such a successful programme would have to be produced and every establishment that decided to replicate the 643 model would need to follow it carefully. With every new franchise, a training programme could 644 be implemented, and regular training sessions conducted to ensure that the model was being 645 practised accordingly in each franchise. Clear communication to all of the managers at the 646 647 franchise Clink training restaurants would help maintain their reputations and areas to focus on to ensure the provision of high quality of food and consistent service. Each franchisee would 648

benefit from an already established Clink name and brand reputation, minimising the risk ofbusiness failure.

651 Given the success of the operation and customer reviews of The Clink restaurants, this research shows that this restaurant training model works and that it is now about maintaining and 652 653 sustaining the high quality of food and service to ensure that their reputation is maintained and strengthened. The model could grow domestically and internationally, and the other ventures 654 they have started; for example, The Clink Events and Clink@Home, could also be replicated 655 in other prisons in the U.K. and elsewhere. Importantly, the model also positively impacts 656 prisoner rehabilitation, and there is an opportunity for the hospitality industry to further benefit 657 The Clink's purpose. There is an ever-increasing skills shortage in the hospitality sector 658 worldwide (Gebbels et al., 2019), and the Clink restaurants run successful training restaurants 659 to equip future hospitality professionals for the front and back of house positions. There is also 660 the opportunity for ex-offenders to draw on their Clink training to establish dining enterprises 661 of their own in the future. Other entrepreneurial initiatives could also be examined as allied 662 forms of ex-offender entrepreneurial activity, e.g., artisan enterprises drawing on food or other 663 produce. 664

665

666 667

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The findings of the current research are only based on the reviews from the four Clink training restaurants located in the U.K. Therefore, consumers' perspectives on other training restaurants (e.g., The Fife and Drum restaurant in the U.S.) may be different. The findings are also based only on TripAdvisor reviews, therefore another online restaurant review platform (e.g., Google reviews) might have contrasting perspectives on the Clink training restaurants. As a review platform, TripAdvisor has its limitations. Although a reviewer can provide qualitative feedback about a dining experience, TripAdvisor limits rated feedback to aspects of the meal,atmosphere, value and service, thereby possibly limiting the richness of the review.

676 This research is based on employing only one research method. Applying other qualitative research methods could have enriched the findings and revealed a more in-depth understanding 677 678 of the Leximancer generated themes. For example, analysis of the TripAdvisor reviews could be combined with in-house customer feedback, such as through evaluation of guest books. A 679 wider selection of methods could also combine both quantitative (e.g., customer surveys) and 680 qualitative evaluations of The Clink's dining experience. Another limitation of our method can 681 be attributed to the security restrictions of entry into The Clink restaurants, most of which do 682 not allow guests to enter with their mobile phone or other electronic devices. This means that 683 photos of the food or experience cannot be uploaded to TripAdvisor and therefore not be 684 explored as a visual element of the dining experience review. 685

Future research is needed to further explore how the prison location influences customers' 686 dining experiences and their awareness of The Clink's purpose. What remains to be known is 687 how customer support for The Clink's cause may have potentially begun to change public 688 689 perceptions through the delivery of professional fine dining restaurant experiences by highly trained chefs and front of house staff whose label as 'prisoners' may be otherwise stigmatised. 690 Further research might also seek to understand the novelty factor, or customer motivations, for 691 692 visiting a Clink restaurant as a niche form of social gastronomy. For example, future research 693 could unveil the consumer decision-making process for visiting restaurants or cafes inside working prisons, pre- and post- dining experiences, focusing on whether the actual visit 694 695 significantly changed visitors' perceptions of offenders to further evaluate the social good of 696 hospitality establishments.

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