

**A qualitative study on training, progression and development amongst Chef's
working in Irish restaurants**

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Abstract

Background: Very limited research has been conducted on career progression and development of Chefs working at different levels within restaurants of Ireland.

Objective: This research intends to explore the perceptions of training, development and motivation in Chefs' career progression. It also tries to explore the organisational support on continuous professional development they encounter during their career.

Design: Applying the Interpretivism paradigm, this research reports the findings from eight unstructured interviews.

Settings: Small casual dining, café and fine dining restaurants of Cork, Limerick and Dublin city of Ireland.

Participants: Five Chefs from casual dining restaurants including one retired Chef, one Chef from the Café, one Chef from the fine dining restaurant and one General Manager of the casual dining restaurants. Participants were recruited from the authors' professional link and prior work relations.

Methods: The raw data collected from eight interviews was analysed generating the themes and sub-themes.

Results: The findings of this research suggest that the communication plays a vital part in order to gain organisational support to upgrade the talent pool through the process of training and development.

Conclusion: The findings of this study concluded that the small restaurants are not providing enough opportunities on training for the Chefs to develop professionally. They are bound to work anti-social and long working hours with enormous work load and disappointing communication gap. Majority of the interviewees pinpointed these factors in leading to the high staff turnover rate of the restaurant sector.

Declaration

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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1. Introduction

Even though there are various attempts of research on the topic ‘Chef’, it is found out that there is minimal research done particularly on the career progression of Chef working in Ireland. This research seeks to study and gain some knowledge on the continuous professional development of Chefs working or previously worked at the casual dining restaurants of Ireland. It is found that there is low level of satisfaction among the Chefs working in the casual dining restaurants (Chuang, Yin, and Dellman-Jenkins, 2009). Some literature suggests that the restaurant industry itself is made up of the small employers who are not well trained themselves and thus are reluctant to avail of such facilities for the staff to progress further and also considers the employment as a form of training on itself (Ram, Sanghera, Abbas and Barlow, 2000). Zetie, Sparrow, Woodfield and Kilmartin (1994) argue that the whole hospitality industry has more difficulty in implementing total quality management than other sector like manufacturing sector and thus is less successful. This is due to the fact that the employees potential within this industry sector is not nurtured or fully supported and their hard work are not valued, that plays a vital part in the organisational growth. Chefs are the internal customers, attention is required to satisfy them and the hierarchical constituency of orders should be changed in order to accommodate suggestions coming from bottom up (Zetie et al., 1994).

1.1. Restaurant Sector of Ireland

According to the survey report prepared by Failte Ireland (2011), Ireland has almost 3770 restaurants in total out of which 2433 are licensed restaurants and 1337 are non- licensed restaurants. Licensed restaurants are those who obtain the special restaurant license to sell alcoholic beverages that are to be sold and consumed within the outlet (Revenue, 2014). Failte Ireland (2011) reports that out of 59993 individuals employed by the restaurant sector of Ireland, licensed restaurants employs 38657 people and non-licensed/ fast food operators employs an estimated 14336 people. Failte Ireland (2011) also shows the data of almost 21693 people employed in the culinary section of the hospitality industry of Ireland. The survey result shows that the restaurant sector employs 30% (of which licensed restaurant employs- 22% and non- licensed restaurant employs- 8%) of the individuals, which holds the major share of employment among the total hospitality sector employment of Ireland. However, the data also reports on the decline in employment within the restaurant sector in 2010 with compare to 2009 (of which licensed restaurants employment declined by 6% and non- licensed restaurants employment declined by 11%) with the highest number of fluctuations seen in the capital city Dublin. The interesting figure that is highlighted in the report suggests that more than 50% employees are female whereas less than 50% are male working in the restaurant sector of Ireland even though it did not have a clearer figure on the gender specifically related to the culinary section of the restaurant sector. Less than 50% of employees were reported to be working as a full time employee year round. Culinary staff within the restaurant sector of Ireland employed during the year 2010 rounds up to 12719 (of which 10621 were

employed by the licensed restaurants and 2098 were employed by the non-licensed restaurants). The report by Failte Ireland (2011) also highlighted some facts on the nationalities working among the restaurant sector. The year round employment for the licensed restaurant comprised of 60% Irish people, 25% from other EU countries, 15% from other nations whereas non- licensed restaurants comprised of 52% Irish people, 36% from other EU countries and 12% with other nationalities. A surprising figure was accounted in the year round employment for culinary section of the hospitality industry of Ireland where Irish people accounted for 12%, EU nationalities accounted for 20% and other nationalities accounted to 31%. Also the figures for the culinary employment in the licensed restaurant shows Irish people at 27%, other EU nationals 34% and other nationals 41% whereas non licensed restaurants comprised of 22% Irish people, 3% from other EU countries and 27% from other nationalities (Failte Ireland, 2011).

1.2. Casual Dining Restaurants and the Chefs

Miller and Washington (2013a) mentioned the Casual dining restaurants as those restaurants that serve a full dinner menu, mostly with the alcoholic beverages along with the complete table service. And as a matter of fact most of the food serving outlets has Chef working in them. Reese (2013), states that Chef may work at the restaurants, hotels, motels, amusement parks, casinos, private households and various other food service facilities. They look after the preparation of everyday food whether in the restaurants or other commercial or non-commercial outlets where food is served. Pratten (2003a) highlighted the fact that many people enter work in the restaurant industry but do not continue for

long due to several factors such as work discipline, conditions of work, the working hours, the pay, lack of career opportunities and many other factors. Krause (2013) states that the staff turnover comes as an adverse effect of organisations cut on the training budgets which also impacts on the employee engagement, retention and the company's performance. Not only that, the report presented by the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI, 2012) mentioned how the Chief Executive of the Restaurants Association of Ireland outlined the shortages of Chefs that the restaurants over Ireland is facing. The sector needs investments on training so as to save the restaurants in this changing economic climate which relies on the Chefs for its survival and also stressed the restaurant sector as an imminent part of the country's economy. Krause (2013) further argues that employers these days are surprised to discover that money is not just the factor that motivates the employees. Due to the high turnover rates being faced by most of the employers, career development is found out as the basic interest of most employees and an essential motivating factor. Brian Fallon, the President of the Restaurants Association of Ireland highlighted on the feedback gathered from the members of the association about the necessity of the training courses that is needed to be practically based on the kitchen, modernised so as to train people in the kitchens, classrooms that not only will provide them platform to learn but also fosters in guaranteeing the long term employment (RAI, 2012).

The rationale for choosing this research topic includes the researcher, who has access to Chefs for the research purposes and has worked in the hospitality industry for 12 years as a Chef/restaurant manager and now works in a different sector. The reason for career change was due to the unsupportive roadmap of

career progression within the restaurant industry. This research tries to study on such perception of career progression that seems to be an important factor for a Chef. It encompasses on the necessity of the training and development that is required for them to adopt and succeed. The support and opportunity provided to the Chef not only shows some impact on their work environment, satisfaction but also effects on work output of the overall organisation.

1.3. Customer Profile of the restaurants

According to the survey result presented in the article by Miller and Washington (2013b), the customer group for the casual and fine dining restaurants are illustrated in the pie chart below;

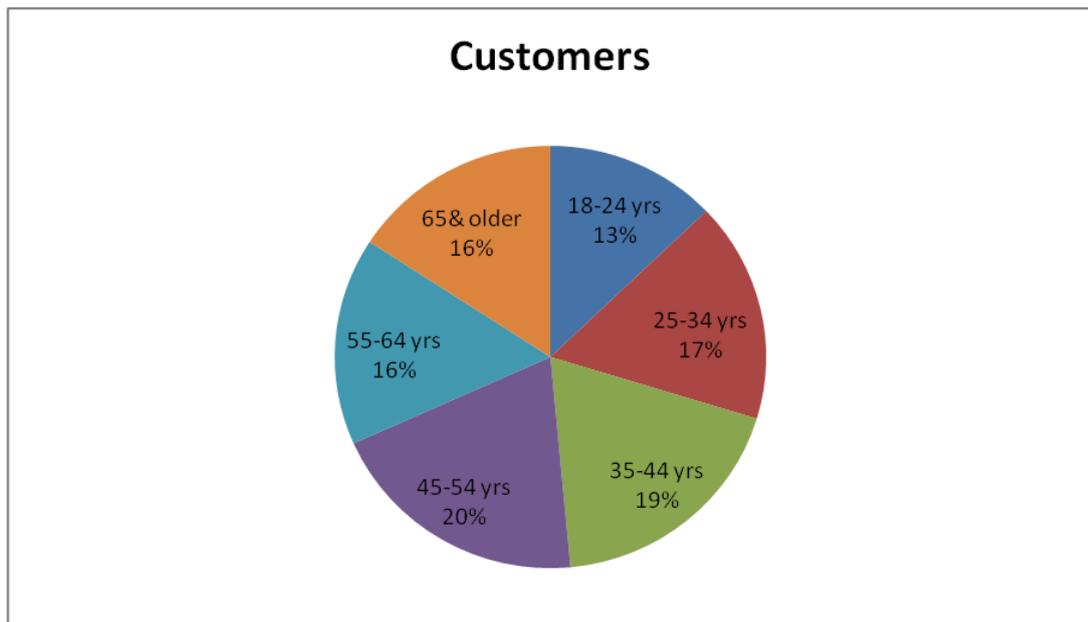


Figure 1.1 Pie Chart of Customer profile of casual dining restaurant

As per the survey result, Miller and Washington (2013b) highlights that the casual dining restaurants have higher percentage of customers from the age group of 45-54 years. And from the data prepared by Bord Bia (2014), consumers rate value

and great service as one of the key factors while deciding a venue to dine out. Consumers also prioritise those restaurants that support the local economy by sourcing locally and are transparent in providing the diners with the information from where the product that landed on their plate were sourced from (Bord Bia, 2014).

2. Literature Review

2.1. *The Chef Job*

Due to the nature of the job and the working environment, the Chef career/profession is defined as the close world where not only certain people will survive but thrive too (Palmer, Cooper and Burns, 2010). The duty of Chef is but not limited to hiring and training of cooks, other food preparation workers, developing recipes, presentation, planning menus, inspecting cooking equipment, ordering food and supplies and complying with the health and safety at work (Reese, 2013), but also covers the knife skills, butchery, handling kitchen paperwork, managing people, managing the business, managing the gross profits (Mullen, 2008). Pratten (2003b) explains how clear the career progression or the road map is to reach the top of the success in the restaurant sector for a Chef. Pratten (2003b) stresses on the various levels during the career path as the success point for different entrants in this sector. Such as for someone it could be success just to be a sous Chef, for others it could be a dream to be a head Chef, or to remain at the preparation level but with the good pay rise, or for some to gain Michelin star and many more. Pratten (2003b) also emphasises the fact that, to grow within the industry it requires dedication, mastery in culinary techniques, good communication skills, leadership qualities which evolves from the college training, on the job training and upskills from other commerce education. Reese (2013) has mentioned in the article how Chef gains knowledge through the formal experience when they start from the positions like line cook. There is not much evidence within the literature that suggests on how most Chefs gain their

experience in Ireland even though there are several educational institutions that provide courses and training. However, the article written by Reese (2013) which collected the data from the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics suggests that the growing number of people are joining community colleges, technical schools, Universities, culinary arts schools to gain formal training programs and even mention about the apprenticeship programs that combines the theoretical knowledge and the practical on the job training knowledge (Reese, 2013). The writing in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2010) discusses how the culinary training programs let one learn about the nutrition calculation, menu planning, portion control, purchasing and inventory methods, proper food storage, hygiene and safety at the workplace. Pratten (2003a) mentioned about the importance of training to develop as a Chef in order to climb the ladder of success. Pratten (2003b) has also mentioned about the fact that the road to the top or to become a successful Chef is yet a difficult one with many obstacles. Pratten (2003b) has also illustrated that the entrants who enter the industry and spend their time in preparing food and learning techniques are the potential candidates to be promoted in this profession. It might not always be the case on every entrant but most of them develop to be next in line to get promotion depending on their capability, experience and the knowledge they gain along the way. And with the promotion, the nature of the job and the job demand changes which requires new skills in order to be able to take more responsibilities and give instructions to the juniors. There are other several reasons for Chefs to acquire training and knowledge along their career to develop. Such as to gain familiarity with ingredients, their uses, the cooking processes, nutrition, safety related knowledge,

to satisfy the ever changing taste demand of the customers and to be competent within the industry (Pratten, 2003b). Training is not just to learn the cooking skills and techniques but also to infuse an individual with the Chef culture (Palmer et al., 2010). Even though Pratten (2003b) mentions that the formal trainings for Chef nowadays are gained through college course in food preparation and hygiene, Krause (2013) argues that to develop professionally or to plan the career activity and getting better at or mastering in a job requires acquisition, attention and refinement of skills and knowledge. This can be achieved only if learning activities and resources are provided accordingly. The career development has been an ongoing dynamic cycle since the job specifications are continuously redefined due to the changing nature of the work environment. Thus at work, the employees not only need support but also need reviewing and re-assessing of their goals and activities for which the employer has a vital part in creating such environment and motivating the employees in unlocking the hidden talents (Krause, 2013; Baum, 2008). Success of the Chefs relates to the success of the restaurant sector which relates to the success of the tourism industry of the country (Baum, 2008).

Chefs job and role of Chef is not what it used to be many years ago. Nowadays it is considered one of the respectable jobs that have gained its reputation in the recent days (Pratten, 2003b; Palmer et al., 2010). The shift has taken place on the Chef job from a less ambitious humble man doing a dirty job to an artistic job (Palmer et al., 2010) which is very much demanding in nature but full of rewards as well (Mullen, 2008). It has emerged as such due to the extraordinary culinary experiences and perfection of those working in this profession. It has also derived

as a resulting factor of their creativity, keen sense of taste and smell, intensive desire to cook, strong leadership and communication skills (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010) and also without a doubt awareness on nutrition and the slanting trend towards knowledge of cooking fresh and healthy food (Mullen, 2008). As the Chef job is very competitive by nature and requires continuous improvement and updates the Chefs are always in a pace to learn and take the challenges (Manzoori-Stamford, 2013a) so that they could contribute towards their own success and of the organisation (Ramsey, 2013). Talking about the career progression within the Chef profession, Chefs may advance to become head Chefs, may go into business as caterers or personal Chefs, open their own restaurants, may become instructors in culinary training programs, consultants in kitchen design or food product or equipment sales. Some choose to be in the position of an executive Chef or food service management positions, working at corporate level overseeing several restaurants of food service facilities or testing recipe or menu and even designing concepts (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010). The survey result mentioned in the article by O'Leary and Deegan (2005) suggests that the hospitality sector as a whole depends on seasonal business thus prompting the alarm of job security and on top of that it lacks the promotion opportunities, insufficient training and staff development within the industry. Weyant (2011) and Krause (2013) emphasises the fact that, in order to decrease costs and turnover, management at restaurants should consider training as an investment. Teh (2013) however relays in the article, suggesting that training is important but training is not applicable at all times because training refines talent, it does not define it and it is also one of the facts that training is about taking

responsibility for your own learning and development and always have to look on your own for the opportunity (Manzoori-Stamford, 2013a). For some, yet they do not want to take the responsibility and remain as a cook as they are so passionate about cooking rather than inclining to do the administrative jobs as of the head Chef or the Executive Chef is (Pratten, 2003a). However, it is also a truth that very few will reach the top as many will either abandon the job in search of a better one or they simply do not want to cook for the living as the way to the top yet not have an easy access (Pratten, 2003b). Some literature even describes Chefs as a tribe due to the Global view of unusual customs, rituals and practices they share (Palmer et al., 2010).

2.2. Chefs' career, progression and development

'Despite widespread descriptions of hospitality and tourism work as "low skills" there is little doubt that there is room for talent and its development within the sector. Talent, in this context, is interpreted in its broadest church sense, to ensure that the sector is able to recruit, retain, support and develop personnel of the highest quality appropriate to the diversity of work and employment situations that exist within the sector' (Baum, 2008, p.725). There is importance of establishing access to training and promotional opportunities within the hospitality industry that may act as one of the motivating factors in attracting more people in building the career in the Chef profession (Pratten, 2003a). However, it is another fact that, young people these days are encouraged in joining the Chef profession due to the glamorous image of the profession and industry that has been fostered by the celebrity Chefs and several TV programmes

(Pratten, 2003b). Yet the reality is unknown that the job needs dedication, hard work, patience, talent and ability (Mullen, 2008). As the food production industry is getting complex and competitive, it has placed huge pressure on the individuals to advance their skills and so has the increasing competitive pressure within the business, growth in statutory regulatory bodies, rapid technological advancement, never ending increase in customer desire put pressure on necessity for both employees and the employer to cope and battle to sustain (Pratten, 2003b). Nevertheless there is no right or wrong path in advancing the career as a Chef, it could be a lengthy process to progress if joined without any formal college education or training yet many successful Chefs' relays that working the way up building the skill gradually has powerful impact on the career (Mullen, 2008). Educational and training collaborations of industry and colleges can help in nurturing the skills and knowledge required to cope with the increasing demand (Pratten, 2003a). According to Ram et al., (2000) restaurant sector has become one of the building blocks of the nation economic wellbeing yet they lack to adopt formal training programmes in upskilling their employees. Pratten and O'Leary (2007) mentioned the fact about the shortages of Chefs within the hospitality sector and recruiting and delivering of in house training to be beneficial so as to address the shortages of labour where training positively stamps on the employee's work and the education fosters such employees' career. Pratten and O'Leary (2007) also stressed the view on tackling the scarcity of labour force within the hospitality sector and specifically on Chefs by addressing the shortage of training, lack of career planning, absence of motivation and the job satisfaction. Being a Chef is not just standing in a huge shiny kitchen guided by a famous

personality rather it is an art that is crafted with one's talent and abilities (Mullen, 2008), building an own identity which consists of both visible components (tasks, routines, remuneration and conditions) and invisible components (norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and ethics) (Palmer et al., 2010). Training helps in enabling Chefs to develop at their own pace (Mullen, 2008). However, it is also another fact that most of the hospitality and tourism organisations find it difficult to compete for talent since they are not inclusive and open minded in providing with the opportunities for employees to enhance their skills and knowledge sets through training and development. In other words they are reluctant in talent identification and acknowledgement (Baum, 2008).

Most of the employers are aware of the fact that the employees these days are driven by opportunities to develop and grow rather than the interim financial gain (Rabey, 2001). People don't just work for high salary or enjoyment at work but rather look for more sustainable and ever growing job environment (Krause, 2013) and mostly young people these days view chef job as a temporary opportunity while studying, travelling and even preparing for other career (Pratten, 2003a). Each employee looks for the advancement, progression and sustainability. Training and development helps in achieving such goals (Krause, 2013). One of the main reason for high staff turnover in the hospitality industry is referred to the lack of career development opportunities and limitations to the access to training (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Ram et al., 2000). With the changing trend in working environment, career development is regarded as a priority for wider range of employees. Career progression comes through learning and learning is to prepare for the future where one sees to develop new skills and

acquire new knowledge so that it paves the path to achieve the goal, be more productive and competitive (Rabey, 2001). Poor training, lack of promotion opportunities are also among the main contributing factors that are found among one of the stress parameter within the Chef profession (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007). The definitions of training and development may differ slightly with the industry (Mello, 2011) and the key to underpin the talent management in the hospitality industry is through training and development (Baum, 2008). However, Mello (2011) writes that in general, training directly refers to the knowledge and skills being provided to the employees whom they will be able to use instantly. It brings change in how they do their job, how they relate to others, conditions under which they perform and acceptance of the job responsibilities. The development refers to the long term aspect that may come out of the training or other learning processes that enhances the career development of the employee and the organisational benefits to some extent. Pratten (2003b) mentioned that within the hospitality sector Chef develop from lower positions such as kitchen porter, cooks or preparation chefs climbing the ladder to the top and in order to develop sequentially trainings and some college education is also required to be augmented with by such additional abilities. Mello (2011) also acknowledges how training and development adds to the employee marketability and employability security which is of greater concern in this day's environment that is hard hit by the developing technology, changing job specifications and work processes (Mello, 2011). Some study suggests that developing training programmes allow the staff to be more productive and progress in the company. Training is one of the essential tools for the staff to grow and master in something what they could

not do before (Ramsey, 2013; Manzoori-Stamford, 2013a). Undeniably, progression can be slow which requires lot of patience and patience is one of the key aspects to success as well (Manzoori-Stamford, 2013b). Mello (2011) also highlights on the point that organisations not only need to train the employees but also should provide with the development opportunities. Employees equally need to participate in acquiring such vast skill set in order to meet today's competitive demand, trained Chefs are the key to tackle with the upcoming challenges that is expected in the future of the restaurant (Manzoori-Stamford, 2013a). Even though the human jobs are replaced with modest technologies to some extent, most organisations still require human taskforce to some degree which are considered as human assets. As assets require investment for development and upgrade, so is required for the human assets and the training and development marks the continuous investment on such asset for the improvement (Mello, 2011). Celebrity Chefs like Gordon Ramsay refers 'the knowledge' to the rules and norms of a Chef life (Palmer et al., 2010). No matter what, the respective job should maximise individual responsibility for how it is done, allow flexible working hours and provide opportunities for growth and not only that, it should reward from productivity, improvements (Pratten, 2003b) and most importantly fair treatment at all developmental phases in order to allow progression throughout the sector for each and every employees, for the benefit of both the organisation and the employees and to increase employee job satisfaction (Zetie et al., 1994).

2.3. Motivation

Daniel, Guttman and Raviv (2011) compared cooking through Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. As articulated in the book 'Management' by Hitt, Black, and Porter, (2008), Abraham Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory, humans have five needs arranged in hierarchy of strength and influence which acts as a motivator and promotes job enrichment. It starts from physiological needs (basic need of food, clothes), Daniel et al., (2011) states that people cook to satisfy the lack of vitamins, minerals and other essential components of the body. Safety/security needs (order, stability, routine, familiarity, certainty and health). Chefs attempt to fulfil their sense of security by creating stable, familiar environment while working (Daniel et al., 2011). Social needs/belongingness (love, affection, belonging and acceptance), cooking or doing the job with a purpose to feed someone and getting the pleasure by doing so, being in the social circle of the Chefs, some Chefs do the job in order to be connected to the ethnic roots or keeping the tradition alive (Daniel et al., 2011). At some points Chefs' belongingness comes to the shared history, shared culture and the disciplinary stigmata (Palmer et al., 2010). Esteem needs (strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery of competence, independence, freedom, fame, glory, dominance, importance, recognition and dignity or appreciation), Chefs would not enjoy doing their job if they do not get attention, recognition and appreciation which enhances their self-esteem (Daniel et al., 2011) and this may happen in a small way such as when one Chef praises other Chefs as a good cook then they feel recognised and the sense of motivation increases (Palmer et al., 2010). Self-actualisation needs (desire to grow) in terms of Chefs can be referred to creativity, daringness, will to

explore new things and being independent (Daniel et al., 2011). However, Maslow has explained that self- actualisation needs are rarely achieved.

Similarly, as articulated in the book by Hitt et al., (2008) Frederick Herzberg's two factor theories deploy the following factors;

- a. Motivators (factors directly related to doing a job) which are listed as Recognition, Growth, Nature of the work, Responsibility and Achievement (Hitt et al., 2008). Chefs' motivators are the passion, keeping up the tradition, recognition and responsibility (Daniel et al., 2011).
- b. Hygiene Factors (conditions surrounding the job) which are listed as Supervision, Benefits, Relation with Co- workers, Working conditions, Compensation (Hitt et al., 2008). The hygiene factors relating to the Chef can be considered as the working environment, limited career opportunities, unsociable working hours, lack of training (Daniel et al., 2011; Pratten, 2003a; Pratten and O'Leary, 2007) and the identity (Palmer et al., 2010).

Some literature explains the working environment as a motivator that directly effect on the employee and the organisational productivity and the progress path (Teh, 2013) which often derives due to the occupational stress (Lo and Lamm, 2005) developing from various modes such as long working hours/shift work that leads to fatigue, unpredictable shifts, few breaks, heavy physical demands, mental and emotional demands, low pay, poor working conditions and lack of resources. The Chef job seem to be one of those job which is affected by most of these above mentioned factors (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007). Motivation is one of the

fundamental key to build high performance teams. It comes through energising the employees at the catering sector by assisting them with trainings and giving them opportunity in progressing to further levels (Manzoori-Stamford, 2013b). Progress opportunity leads to success and satisfaction for both the employee and the employer which can be achieved through employee training, education accomplishments and job enhancements. It is possible when an open environment and effective communication platform is created for openness of ideas, exchange of views, knowledge transfer that makes it happen and employee get opportunities to progress (Baum,2008). Most people enter the profession of Chef to progress along with the learning (Pratten, 2003b) and in most of the cases, lack of career development programs leads employer to miss out on gaining employee commitment, motivation for better performances and upgrade the general workforce (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). Dickerson (2013) elaborated on the ground that motivation can be regarded as a booster that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours that causes humans to act in a specific direction. Motivation and especially of employees is directly associated with productivity and with maintenance factors. Employees that are committed to their jobs, who feel challenged, who have the opportunity to fulfil their goals will show less harmful behaviour on the job, will be absent less frequently, will be less inclined to change jobs, and, most importantly, they will produce at a higher level. However the motivation comes from two primary factors, Extrinsic and Intrinsic. The external factors such as money, incentives are regarded as the extrinsic factors. The internal force or desire to grow within an individual is regarded as the intrinsic factors such as career progression opportunities (Dickerson, 2013). Many

people choose to become a Chef due to the nature of the work (name and fame) and their career interests that involves relations and self-fulfilment, challenge, learning and opportunity, and competitions (Chuang et al., 2009) totally unaware of the fact that the world of the Chef is a closed world with compare to other jobs (Palmer et al., 2010) but what keeps them at work is the feeling of connection, satisfaction on being able to satisfy people needs, opportunity to pass on their skills and help others grow (Chuang et al., 2009).

2.4. Industry, Working Environment and Changes

Culinary work is still considered an extremely challenging, competitive, requires hard work which paves the path in ones career for learning and self- improvement (Chuang et al., 2009). Even though the literature tends to have limited findings on continuous professional development of employees on hospitality (Restaurant) sector and mainly on Chef's career progression path, some literature suggests that the chef profession as a whole have plenty of room for career progression which requires attention from the management and the employer in order for the Chefs to advance in their career (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005, Chuang et al., 2009). Weyant (2011) also stresses on the point that employees of the restaurants lack skill levels which somehow hampers the recruitment and retention of the employees. Weyant (2011) also states on the fact that food service employees regarded the training as useful if the training was hands on and on the job and its content was relevant to work. Restaurants represent a significant segment of the service economy and the employee development issues affect the restaurant industry (Weyant, 2011). There is an urgent need for the hospitality employers in

addressing the high dropout rates within the industry which may lead to the wastage of trained personnel and may also lead to organisational loss (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). Weyant (2011) also addressed the high rate of turnover within the restaurant industry and suggests the restaurant operators to focus on the employee training to remain competitive within the market. The turnover mostly relates to the dissatisfaction with the job which comes from several factors within the working environment such as; lack/limited career progression opportunities, limitations in career options and unsociable working hours with poor remuneration (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). This practice could be reduced by developing reward system, flexible working hours and compensation for unsociable working hours, committing to provide personal development programs and training with possible financial support (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). A successful restaurant/employer develops an organisational culture which is not build overnight, it is done through lengthy learning process and builds service standards to next level by articulating the so called philosophy of service where culture refers to environment, and philosophy refers to guiding principles that focuses on how to behave in this environment (Teh, 2013). Most restaurants till today tend to follow hierarchical management structure which very rarely focuses in providing employee with sufficient facilities such as educational support, trainings and creation of open working environment which leads to job dissatisfaction and high staff turnover rate (Zetie et al., 1994). Zetie et al., (1994) argues how some employers tend to look on behalf of benefits to the managerial levels and also fall short on providing employees with the facilities that is required for them to grow their potential. Ramsey (2013) mention that not only by

giving what customers want make a good and successful employer but by building good relations and knowing what could let the staff grow their potentials is a key to success in being a successful employer. It allows the employer hold healthy relation with the staff by showing respect for the individual employee and upgrade organisational environment with job enrichment. Respect refers to open environment that encourages and rewards creativity with minimal gap in communication (Ramsey, 2013).

It is widely accepted that due to the kitchen environment that is driven with speed, Chefs working in the casual dining kitchen have less time to prepare the food, less exposure to skill variety, lack in task significance and autonomy to execute artistic ideas with the food they serve which may be the key in achieving professional recognition and personal growth (Chuang et al., 2009). The world of Chef is also considered a hostile world (Palmer et al., 2010) where the operation is led from top down (Zetie et al., 1994), thus it is a necessity of this day to understand the motivational incentives that triggers those Chefs satisfaction which may lead to a more productive performance and commitment to the company (Chuang et al., 2009). Chefs have the ability to do what not many people could do (Palmer et al., 2010) so it is a must to provide Chefs with recognition and autonomy at work (Chuang et al., 2009), enhance the work environment by giving them to take additional responsibility, promote them and include them in the training and development programmes as it is also one of the best way in identifying and underpinning the talent management (Baum, 2008). Since the Chef job is not just about cooking (Mullen 2008), culinary craftsmanship are also equally important in the Chef profession (Chuang et al., 2009) as the management of the business is

(Mullen, 2008) which may change the personal potential, motivation and manoeuvrability of the Chefs (Zetie et al., 1994) even though the opportunities are limited for those Chefs working in casual dining kitchens where there are less sophistication in food quality, variety, culinary artistry and creativity (Chuang et al., 2009), a collaborative work environment supported by the facilities of continuous learning and skill development is required at every levels (Chuang et al., 2009; Zetie et al., 1994). As several literature suggests that monetary reward has not just remained the motivational incentive in order to motivate and satisfy Chefs at different professional levels (Chuang et al., 2009; Krause, 2013; Rabey, 2001) opportunities to learn and advance their skills through craftsmanship (Chuang et al., 2009) where skills are worth more than qualification even though basic health and hygiene qualifications are beneficial to start the profession (Mullen, 2008). Drive, focus, determination, vocation, passion, dedication, sacrifice, volatility, creativity, psychological mind set and patience are the equipment that builds a Chef (Palmer et al., 2010) but requires recognition, identity and challenging learning environment in order to progress in their career (Chuang et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2010). However, it is also adequate to identify the need, the changing trend has created so as to supply and align the talent (Baum, 2008) that is required for Chefs in order to progress along their career (Chuang et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2010).

3. Research Aims and Objectives

From the literature reviewed above, it can be discerned that the Chef profession comprises unique features that are formed through dedication, attention, willingness to learn and succeed, passion and leadership capabilities. However, the Chef profession can also carry long unsocial working hours, high levels of stress, limited career opportunities, unpleasant working environments and excessive workloads (Chuang et al., 2009; Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010; O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). This study seeks to gain an insight and a deeper level of understanding into the perceptions of training and development in a Chef’s career goal, those working at casual dining restaurant kitchen of Ireland.

This study aims to explore the experiences gathered of Chefs working in Irish restaurants’ regarding the level of organisational support towards their professional development. This study seeks to identify the elements that are required to create and sustain the work environment which evolves due to the opportunity that is provided to the Chef during their career, and how such opportunity motivates them towards the job they do. The purpose of the study is to present an understanding about the importance of career progression that comes through training and development in Chefs’ profession and how they individually perceive their working environment and the opportunities offered. Thus, the research will involve conducting a qualitative study on continuous professional development of Chef Profession in Ireland within the casual dining restaurant. Some literature suggests that the industry as a whole has poor career structures, insufficient training and staff development (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). Due to

the limited research in the literature about the career progression of a Chefs working at different levels in the casual dining restaurants, this research tends to gather as much live information as possible of the experiences of Chefs working in casual dining restaurants. In order to study the career progression/development and motivation of the Chef through training, the author realises the necessity to explore;

- a. How individuals were inspired and motivated to choose the Chef profession?
- b. What career opportunity does the job environment or the profession of a Chef have?
- c. What kind of organisational support in relation to training and development does the Chef receive during their career?
- d. And how such training and development programmes may help in fostering their career path?

The objective of the research points to those Chefs working at various levels in the casual dining restaurants, their perception of the working environment, organisational support, motivation towards the job, satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the job and the opportunities within the profession. Hence, the overall research objectives are outlined so as to address the following research questions.

3.1. Research questions

To study the experience of organisational support on continuous professional development amongst Chef's working in Irish restaurants'.

To explore the perception of training, motivation and development on career progression amongst Chefs working in Irish restaurants’.

4. Methodology

According to the findings in the literature, the research methodology is viewed “as an approach to the process of the research, encompassing a body of methods” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 73), which encompasses the “thought of an organised critical discussion of the principles and methods of a subject area” (Horn, 2009, p.108) and due to its nature it is regarded as not only satisfying the questions with the right answers but also acts as a blueprint in meeting the objectives (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Thus, it is vital in adopting a research methodology because it not only helps in identifying the methods that has been used to answer the research question but also portrays the level of understanding on the topic being researched (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). It is found in the literature that there are several research conducted under the topic ‘Chef’ such as occupational stress within the Chef profession, Leadership styles, motivational factors for Chef and high turnover rate among the Chef profession. However, the literature tends to have very limited resources on Chefs career, progression and development. The author realises the gap in the literature and has tried to put some light on the career progression of Chef and the importance of training. The author also realises that Pratten (2003a) articulated some evidences on the importance of training in order to prevent the highest turnover rate within the Chef profession.

4.1. *Philosophy of the research*

Philosophy of the research connects to the “development of the knowledge and the nature of that knowledge” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 127). It is known that various assumptions are made at several stages of the research which moulds the

whole scenario on how the research questions are understood, the choice and application of the method are made and the interpretation on the findings are done (Saunders et al., 2012). Philosophy is referred to as “the use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge, especially of ultimate reality or general causes and principles” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 55). The research philosophy refers to the assumptions that are made for the particular research on how the world is viewed by the researcher. The acceptance and adoption of particular research philosophy is essential for the research strategy that not only determines the methods used to answer the research questions but also outpours the understanding of the concept what the researcher is trying to explore of investigate (Saunders et al., 2012). There are several philosophical frameworks (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Collis and Hussey (2009) research should be guided by the philosophical frameworks which are known as paradigms. There are two main types of paradigm that guides a research. Positivism and Interpretivism are those two types of paradigm lying at the extremities of a continuum of paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The view widely followed by the positivism states that a research should identify the rules of the universe that relates to the universal truths that we live in (Horn, 2009) and the research should be conducted in a value-free way as far as possible (Saunders et al., 2012) that primarily focuses on measuring the social phenomena by the use of theories emerging from the natural sciences which is singular, objective and such views are not impacted by any investigations (Collis and Hussey, 2009). It comprises of collecting the data from the viewable reality with an intention to look for the casual relationships, regularities in the data so as to come up with the law- like generalisations similar

to those that are founded by the scientists through experiments and observations (Saunders et al., 2012). With contrast to Positivism, Interpretivism believes in social reality being highly subjective rather than objective since it is guided by the perception of the researchers (Collis and Hussey, 2009) because “the social world of business and management is far too complex to lend itself to theorising by definite laws in the same way as the physical sciences” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137). It describes, translates or comes closer to the meaning not judged on the frequency of the natural momentum/ phenomena of the social world where the findings do not come from the statistical analysis of the quantitative data (Collis and Hussey, 2009) which means that the rich/multidimensional insights of this complex world are not lost due to avoidance or reduction of law- like generalisations in the research (Saunders et al., 2012). The main philosophical assumptions that underpins the two paradigms are; Ontology (the nature of reality), Epistemology (what constitutes valid knowledge) and Axiology (the role of values from the view of a researcher) (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2012). Positivism from the Ontology assumption views the reality as objective, singular, external and independent of social actors, Epistemology assumption states that the researcher is independent from the subject being researched, Axiology states that the research is value- free and unbiased as the researcher is independent of the data which help them to maintain the objective stance whereas Interpretivism from the perspective of Ontology assumption states that the reality is multiple, subjective, socially constructed and may change, Epistemology assumes that the interaction occurs between the researcher and those being researched, Axiology assumes the biases are present due to the value

bound nature where the researcher is part of what is being researched (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2012). The most common and popular way to characterise a research is either by a Quantitative or Qualitative approach (Horn, 2009). Qualitative data are usually related to the results in findings with a high degree of validity (that resembles with the process under which the study is done and the boundary of the research finding) (Collis and Hussey, 2009) which is normally transient, understood only within the context and are associated with an interpretive methodology where the data are in the nominal form (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Horn, 2009) and has its roots in a variety of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, communication, economics and semiotics that is dated back to the 19th century (Cooper and Schindler, 2014) which alters with the positivist methodology or Quantitative approach which has the data in the numerical form that is drawn from the results of findings with high degree of reliability [whose one aspect of the finding of the research is credibility and the other is the validity, (Collis and Hussey, 2009)] which could relate at various points in time, contexts and are normally precise (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Cooper and Schindler, 2014; Horn, 2009). Furthermore, Cooper and Schindler (2014) states that Qualitative research methodology is based on the researchers commitment and participation in order to provide depth and detail of the research matter by immersing themselves into the phenomenon to be studied, collecting data of situations and interaction between people and the subject matter whereas the Quantitative research methodology is moreover used in theory testing where distance is maintained with the research matter so that there is no possibility of biases in the results, covers the larger pool of samples and produces

the outcome as predictions. According to Horn (2009) and Saunders et al., (2012) the two common approaches to the researches are the Inductive and Deductive approach. If there are no theories or view prior to the research but theory and models develops as the research progresses that often is viewed in the form of a conceptual framework is known as inductive approach whereas if the research starts with a theory, focuses on hypothesis starting and developing from the study of literature which is then tested with the series of propositions so as to justify with the findings that may confirm or refute the hypothesis is known as the deductive approach.

To study and explore the perceptions of chef on their career perspectives, the author conducted in- depth interviews with six working chefs', one retired chef and one management personnel of the restaurant. The interviews started with explaining the nature of the research by the author followed by the question about the general background of the interviewee and then the questions came along with the context. Interviews were mostly controlled by the interviewee as they showed some strong feeling towards the research topic. However, the author was aware of the topics that were needed to be covered during the interview and tried to capture all the information required for the research purpose. The interviewees were emotionally emphasizing on the factor what they feel as a turning point in their career. Out of these interviewees one of the Chefs is from café and one is from fine dining restaurant and the rest are working at the casual dining restaurant. The purpose to include non- casual restaurant Chef for the interview was to grasp, capture the unique experiences, learn about the feelings and compare the views on the research question from different positions of the casual dining restaurant and

to explore what kind of similarities or dissimilarities the profession may have with those working in the fast casual dining restaurant and fine dining restaurant. Thus, the author inherited the Interpretivism paradigm for the research and all of the data collected is qualitative data. Different individual has different ways of expressing and interpreting the life experiences. Collis and Hussey (2009) further argued that interpretivists/constructivist paradigm associates the reality that is very unique to every individual and pours various interpretations to the feelings of the world. It is also demonstrated by Collis and Hussey (2009) that the Interpretivism believes that the social reality is determined by people individual perceptions, thus it is rather subjective than objective. In-depth interviews not only facilitated the author to fully understand the feelings and the experiences of the interviewees by recording the verbal responses, it also helped to observe and study the non-verbal expressions such as the emotions, body language and the tone of voice. Different equipment is used to capture the context, such as cameras, video recorder, audio recorder and notebook (Collis and Hussey, 2009) and for this dissertation author has used the audio recording device to capture the verbal conversation and captured the non- verbal actions in writing. Author believes that this research matches the features that have the similarities with the Interpretivism paradigm. According to Collis and Hussey (2009) and Saunders et al., (2012) Interpretivism consists of some special features such as; produces data which is rich and subjective, allows findings to be generalised from one setting to another similar setting, the findings are of high validity but less reliability, uses smaller pool of sample and at natural locations. Thus, the author realises the necessity to adopt the Interpretivism paradigm for this research.

4.2. Data Collection

This research aims to study the experiences of career progression in a Chefs' career. The literature suggests that one of the best ways in addressing is conducting the interview. As it is stated by Collis and Hussey (2009) and Cooper and Schindler (2014) that the interview stresses in exploring 'data on understandings' opinions what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, which people have in common. Thus, such interview will be unstructured under an interpretive paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Collis and Hussey (2009) and Cooper and Schindler (2014) further mentioned that the most common form of interview are one to one interview and the attributes of the unstructured interview is where there are no specific questions, the question arises along the interview, are likely to be open ended with probes to explore in depth to the answers given by the interviewee. This particular research followed a qualitative methodology with an interpretivist approach. Collis and Hussey (2009) and Cooper and Schindler (2014) further state that interview is one of the best methods to collect the primary data from the interviewee with the benefit of observing and recording the non- verbal expressions and the verbal attributes. Face to face interview will also allow the researcher to observe the emotional expressions that come out during the meeting that adds value to the research on how a particular factor emotionally relates to a person and how the virtual consequence of the actual incidents come out in the expressions of the interviewee.

During the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Chefs working at different levels at the restaurants in Dublin, Cork and Limerick so as to study the perception of Chef towards career progression from different levels and to compare the perception of those working at various locations. The interviews were audio recorded and the non-verbal expressions were written down. Furthermore, face to face interview allowed the interviewer to observe the body languages and emotional attachments with the expressions coming out from the interviewee. The recording was then transcribed grouping into themes and sub-themes as per the perceptions, link to satisfaction/dissatisfaction and motivation deriving out from the personal experience of the recruited samples' continuous professional development.

4.3. Research Limitations

The Chef's participating in this research was/were at various levels of their career. This may perhaps relay some variation in the perception of the training, motivation in the professional development of each individual Chef and without a doubt a larger pool of sample may give more robust outcome on the topic. The Chefs working at different establishments, such as hotels, high end restaurants, resorts, country clubs and others, may have different experiences other than those working at the casual dining restaurants. However, the author is aware of the fact that not many people would like to talk about their work experiences so easily that may have impacted their career positively or negatively. And to study the topic through different perspectives, the author recruited the participants from three different counties of Ireland including three different types of restaurant. This

process gave the research a prism of knowledge on the topic. Nonetheless, future research could include a greater variety of geographic locations within Ireland, more variety of samples including Chefs working at the other sectors of hospitality industry who may have different experiences during their career since different hospitality establishments may have different strategies towards employee training, development and motivation. Yet, it was noticed during the research that not everyone was open and comfortable in talking about their perception of workplace strategy on employee training and development. And lastly the female Chefs participation may result with some variance to the findings what this research have presented, more management participation may reflect the views that could be useful in the comparison and since this study is only a qualitative study, quantitative approach may derive a difference in the outcome.

4.4. *Research Ethics*

It is necessary to consider the ethical issues prior to conducting the research. According to Collis and Hussey (2009), all participants should be involved voluntarily for the purpose of the research avoiding any types of offerings, rewards and/or negotiations. And also it is an important task of the researcher to make the commitment of anonymity and confidentiality to all the interviewees involved in the research. This not only assures the participants of being unidentified but also helps researcher in gathering the honest and truthful information from the participants as they can feel the security of freedom in expressing such truth. The pride and dignity of the participant shall not be tampered by any means. Collis and Hussey (2009); Saunders et al., (2012) further

argued that factual data collected should not be exaggerated and neither should the valid points made by the interviewee be avoided. Actual data should be captured and presented without false make-up.

5. Analysis of Interview Data

Qualitative data are more likely to be elastic, ambiguous and complex in nature than the quantitative data since the meaning is normally reflected from the social interpretation (Saunders et al., 2012). Analysing the qualitative data possess several challenges in both positivists and interpretivists due to the lack of instruction in methods in analysing or in other words the data analysis process itself is poorly described (Collis and Hussey, 2009). According to Horn (2009) qualitative data corresponds to the less structured data due to the fact that they are collected in a less structured method but gives the subject a degree of control over what the interviewee expresses by ensuring the higher degree of internal validity. Being involved in the process of analysing the data refers to reorganising and creating the categories from the data. It is an alternative to the deductive approach which allows the researcher to gather the data and create the themes by the process of exploration of the data (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, during this research, the data collected from the interviewee were transcribed, summarised and then the themes, sub-themes were identified from the frequency of the occurrence. Thematic approach allowed the author to search and identify the main issues concerning the participating Chefs. The themes and sub-themes identified from the data are listed below;

Strategy of the Organisation and the Working Environment		
Strategy	Communication and Involvement	<p><i>Good communication helps in building good working environment.</i></p> <p><i>Transparency in the communication is required.</i></p> <p><i>Requests are heard but no actions are taken.</i></p>
	Talent Management	<p><i>Restaurants should identify the talent on a timely manner and provide them with the necessary training and educational support.</i></p> <p><i>High Turnover is the fear factor for the management to invest in talent management process.</i></p>
	Training and Development	<p><i>Have to work part time instead of full time in order to take up further education even though being the lone bread winner of the family.</i></p> <p><i>Training is one of the fundamental steps in the ladder of career development.</i></p> <p><i>Job insecurity increases and until the restaurant treat their employee as a valuable asset and invest in the skill refurbishment, this job remains a disappointed profession.</i></p> <p><i>Changed job several times in search of a better one who could understand the importance of employee development and help in supporting through education and trainings.</i></p> <p><i>We learn personally through online resources which are not enough.</i></p> <p><i>Left behind nature leads to high turnover within this profession.</i></p> <p><i>Only due to the legal requirements the food handlers were given the food and hygiene training.</i></p>
Work Environment	Anti-Social Hours	<p><i>Have to wait for weeks to see my kids.</i></p> <p><i>No family life.</i></p> <p><i>It is the nature of the job which requires hard work and dedication, so one has to cope with it.</i></p>
	Work Load	<p><i>Work load decreases if employees are equipped with necessary skills and trainings to cope with the changing demand.</i></p> <p><i>Three peoples job are done by two people and at some stage it is often done by a single person.</i></p>

Table 1.1: Table of Themes and Sub- Themes abstracted from the Interview

5.1. Background/ Industry profile of the Interviewees

The sample Chefs are chosen due to the length of time they have been working in the Restaurant industry at different levels from which different angle of perceptions on the research objective outlined can be achieved. Several Chefs those who participated in the interview and the samples were recruited from the professional link and prior work relation of the researcher.

The appointed interviewees are as follows:

Interviewee	Years of Experience	Location Of the Restaurant	Type of Restaurant	Position in the Restaurant	Restaurant Establishment date.
Chef A	13 years	Cork City	Casual dining	Kitchen Manager	2000
Chef B	9 years	Wilton	Café	Café Manager	1971
Chef C	10 years	Cork City	Casual dining	Preparation kitchen in charge	Approximately 12 years
Chef D	15 years	Dublin	Casual dining	Preparation kitchen manager	1998
Chef E	10 years	Limerick	Casual dining	Sous chef	1996

Table 1.2: Interviewee and company profile A

To study more broadly from different perspectives on the Chef job and the variations that may bring to the result, the researcher also approached with some other members for the interview who are related to this industry, worked as a Chef and worked in this sector for several years. It is illustrated in the table shown below;

Interviewee	Years of Experience	Location of the Restaurant	Type of Restaurant	Position in the Restaurant	Restaurant Establishment Date
Chef F	10 Years	Douglas	Fine dining	Chef	1999
Chef G	15+ Years	Retired due to chronicle illness	Casual dining	Chef	Latest work establishment prior to retirement, 1986.
Management Personnel	14 Years	Cork City	Casual dining	General Manager	2000

Table 1.3: Interviewee and company profile B

5.2. Interviewee Profiles

Chef A: is a male of 31 years. Entered the profession without any prior experience and any culinary training from the college but has cooked simple meals for the family. It was not a choice as a career in the beginning but got an entry in search of job. Since then they have enjoyed working but did not consider very much satisfied with the job due to the nature of the job. Aims to open an own restaurant one day and vows to provide each employee with an opportunity not only to grow within the restaurant but also in achieving their personal goals in whatever possible ways. Chef A started the job as a kitchen porter then pizza Chef, grill Chef and gained the height of kitchen manager within a year. Restaurant has nearly 60 full time employees and almost half of them are Chefs. Restaurant serves Mexican, Italian and Irish food. Customers are mainly regulars and most commonly family customers but also accommodates heavy footfall of the event passer-by since it is located centrally at the city within the proximity of the theatres.

Chef B: is a male of 27 years who entered the profession with some culinary training but with no prior work experience. Chef B was inspired to choose the profession due to the family affiliation and is enjoying the job because of the fact there is so much of competency within the profession itself and it is a luck to have the job in hand during this economic downturn but not much satisfied with the work environment. Chef B started the job 9 years ago as a café Chef and recently been promoted as a café manager. The Café employs 23 people and serves mainly fast food like burger, chips, wrap sandwich, cake and non-alcoholic beverages. The café has not yet entered in any of the awards to the knowledge of the interviewee.

Chef C: is a male and 37 years of age. Chef C in a funny way expresses that the choice of the profession was centred predominantly on the availability of work during that time and some inspiration came through emerging name and fame of the Chef profession. Chef C showed satisfaction with the job since the start of the job around 10 years ago in a restaurant which was established approximately 12 years ago with more than 50 staff to date. The Chef entered the restaurant with some culinary training and is responsible for preparing mostly European food including Italian and some Asian as well. Chef C mentioned that the restaurant customers are mostly regulars, passer-by and family people. Chef C did not realise of any incident that the restaurant entered on any competitions but stated with very little confidence that one of the particular items many years ago may have won the award due to food critics but not in the knowledge what it has earned.

Chef D: is a male chef of 40 years. Chef D acknowledges the lack of college education to pursue other profession. Thus, the ease of the access within the profession during that time attracted the interviewee. Chef D came from the travel and tourism agency background. Chef D started the career as a preparation Chef which included peeling onions, garlic, preparing salads and is currently working as a preparation kitchen manager since 2008.

Chef E: is a male of 34 years who has recently changed the job in search for better work environment and opportunities. Chef E has no specific reason or the inspiration to choose this profession but is finding it hard to change the career path.

Chef F: is 37 years of age and a male chef. Chef F has no clear inspiration to join the profession but adopted the profession in order to fulfil the daily basic requirements, in other words for the survival. Chef F aims to run a B&B type of establishment in the near future where a family can run the business without hiring and relying on other staffs and thus may reduce the maintenance cost such as taxes, staff training and development cost, facilities cost and many other employee related provisions. Chef F works in a fine dining restaurant which employs approximately 15 full time staff members out of which 7 are the Chefs in the kitchen. The restaurant mainly serves Indian, Thai, Chinese and European meal. The customers are mostly family type, couples and working people. To the knowledge of the Chef the restaurant has not participated in any type of awards and recalls the fact that there are not much of the changes physically, strategically and technically within the restaurant since its establishment. Chef F started the

career as a Chef some 10 years ago in this profession and currently looks after the overall operation of Chinese, Thai and European food section.

Chef G: is a male of 57 years old. Chef G portrayed the passion of cooking that led to choose this profession and started the job as a line Chef but never get an opportunity to progress further. Chef G realises that the age might be a contributing factor for not being considered for the upskilling and promotions. Chef G was so emotional about the fact that due to chronicle illness there is no return to the profession. However, Chef G mentions no regrets for working for so long in the same field even though there was no opportunity. It was solely due to the *'personal desire and passion for cooking'*. But now Chef G is full of strong suggestion that *'if there is a chance, better get away from this job'*. Never mind the *'lack of support during the working years, there is not even any emotional support these days during the forced retirement'* which has almost restricted the mobility, said Chef G. At some point during the expression Chef G was full of tears in the eyes.

Management Personnel: is a male of 39 years, currently working as a General Manager for a casual dining restaurant in Cork city and looks after the overall management of the restaurant (front of the house and the back of the house operations). The General Manager started the job as a kitchen porter 14 years back in the same restaurant and progressed very quickly. The General Manager entered the profession without any prior experience of the field and used to work as a Marine Engineer where the work environment was very poor. Thus, stressed that the *'work environment is vital in any profession'* which plays a major role in the

'job satisfaction level of the employee'. Since leaving the previous job the General Manager went in search of job for the survival, worked for few months in a meat factory, again was not satisfied with the working environment and thought to build a career in different sector ending up in a restaurant.

5.3. *Sample Population*

The sample of Chefs who participated in this study are/were working in this industry for more than eight years and were recruited from the professional and personal link to the author. All of the interviewees are male. The youngest interviewee is 27 years and the oldest interviewee is at the age of 57 years. The rest of the interviewees are at the range of 30- 40 years. Almost all of the interviewees have nearly 10 years or more years of experience. Due to their long term involvement in the industry, the author realises that they are capable of donating the valuable ideas on the research topic.

6. Findings

6.1. Strategy

The majority of the participants talked about the need to address the strategy of the restaurant. Some of the Chefs even mentioned that the main strategy of the restaurant is that *Staffs are paid to work; no matter how the work situation is they have to work under that*. The main strategies that derived from the information provided by the interviewee were talent management, training and development and communication and involvement.

6.1.1. Talent Management

The majority of the Chefs echoed same voice that the strategy of the restaurant has not changed even though the time is changing rapidly. Some of the Chefs mentioned that they are not expecting change in the strategy overnight but portrayed the necessity of identifying the talent and equipping them with the necessary tools through training and college based courses. One of the participants remembers a time when management overlooked the employee suggestion of giving an opportunity for at least one or two Chef every year to join a course or training programmes. Such programmes may help the Chef to build their confidence with the acquisition of knowledge and techniques of the modern era. Majority of the Chefs showed their frustration towards the job due to the lack of such strategy in making the employee competitive within the market. However, the voice of the management personnel was different in clarifying about the talent management process by saying that, *due to the high turnover in the Chef profession it is very difficult for the employers to come up with such programmes*

but acknowledged the fact that there is an urgent need to deploy such talent management strategies in order to survive in the ever growing competitive market. *Not only by facilitating one or two person can make the working environment better but by building a better team can help foster the creativity and work efficiency*, said the management interviewee.

6.1.2. Training and Development

Most of the Chefs stated that the restaurant provided them with the food and hygiene training *only due to the legal requirement; all food handlers must have such trainings*. Apart from this training majority of the Chefs mentioned that there were no formal trainings given so as to upgrade their skills and creativity. Some participants even mentioned that, *we learn personally through online resources which are not enough*. They do the learning of new techniques from the YouTube videos and other online sources. One of the Chefs spoke of the consequences having to work part time instead of full time in order to take up further education even though being the lone bread winner of the family and without any financial assistance from the employer. Majority of the Chefs showed the awareness that *training is one of the fundamental steps in the ladder of career development*. They also mentioned that *job insecurity increases and until the restaurant treat their employee as a valuable asset and invest in the skill refurbishment, this job remains a disappointed profession*. One of the Chefs expressed the frustration and outrage with the profession and mentions of *job change several times in search of a better one who could understand the importance of employee development and help in supporting through education and trainings*. Few Chefs reckons that, *left*

behind nature leads to high turnover within this profession. Although, it was mentioned by the management interviewee that, there are no robust plans in the company on the employee development, *the best thing would be bringing in some tutors to train the employees onsite so that the restaurant does not lose any staff on peak hours and the non-peak hours could be utilised by facilitating such trainings and provide them with a fruitful experience.* Management interviewee also mentioned the fear that *it will be a huge loss and wastage of the resources once the Chef gets trained and leaves the organisation which not only the restaurant but any business can afford these days.*

6.1.3. Communication and involvement

Out of the eight interviewees only one of them did not mention about the communication but most of the Chefs highlighted that there is a huge gap in the communication within the employee and the management. Some of them emphasised that *good communication helps in building good working environment.* However, majority of the Chefs showed dissatisfaction with the job due to the lack of good communication and emphasised that *transparency in the communication is required* not only to build a healthy working environment but also to keep track of the changes within and outside the organisation. Few of the interviewees mentioned that *the requests are heard but no actions are taken* but the management interviewee mentioned that these situations occur due to the high turnover rate of the employee. However, some of the Chefs said that *management always have an excuse for not communicating with their employees.* Few of them even mentioned that, if there are any mistakes or pitfalls, then management jumps

over from nowhere to punish a staff but they never show up to be informative for the staffs on time.

6.2. Work Environment

Most of the interviewees talked freely about the importance of working environment in a Chefs career. Some said that the *Chef profession is a closed world*, some mentioned it as a living hell and some refers to the life beyond the social hours. Having said these above comments about the working environment majority of the Chef believes that there are no changes happening soon due to the availability of cheap labour and low barrier to entry. Some of them identifies that this profession will never change unless the awareness comes from the top level management. However, majority of the Chefs stated that, nowadays people view this job as an apprenticeship, seasonal job or even transit point while waiting to embark on their desired career. They relate this to the fact that the profession has long unsocial working hours, work load, pressure and lack of opportunity. The management interviewee also stated that *work environment is vital in any profession* which plays a major role in the *job satisfaction level of the employee*.

6.2.1. Anti-Social Hours

One of the interviewee expressed this feeling in a very emotional way; *I have to wait for weeks to see my kids, there is no family life* yet another interviewee shows some understanding about the job and expresses that *it is the nature of the job which requires hard work and dedication, so one has to cope with it*. However, majority of the participants expressed their discomfort with the working hours. Some of them said that they went to the management with the ideas to compensate

such hours at least once in a month but said that the management did not bother to act on them. One of the interviewee mentioned of being unaware how the weekend life looks like in the city areas even though working in the middle of the city. Some said that, there were times when they have to sleep in-house in the restaurant to accommodate some of the functions which run till late. Some fears that it will be hard for them to integrate within the society when they stop working because they never get a chance to mix up with the society during the working days.

6.2.2. Work Load

Almost everyone is aware of the effects that economic downturn has brought in the working lives of many organisations. *Chef profession is not an untouched one*, said majority of the interviewees. It has led to huge cuts in the work force and recruitment, *three peoples job are done by two people and at some stage it is often done by a single person*, same voice came from the majority of the interviewee. Some stated that, they are aware of these happenings but could not believe that they are not well trained to cope with such pressures because *work load decreases if employees are equipped with necessary skills and trainings to cope with the changing demand*. However, management interviewee poured the view that it is not the work load rather it is the demand of the time that requires flexibility from the employee in performing at various levels and it is also about helping each other to develop the good working environment.

7. Discussion

The research data was collected from the interviews with seven Chefs and one General Manager of the casual dining restaurant out of which one Chef was from the café, one was from the fine-dining and one from the casual dining but retired due to chronic illness. From the interviews, the most common factor in the career development and the motivation has directed towards the education and training.

Some Chefs highlighted on the importance of good communication as a process in building the good working environment because the increased communication in the kitchen and the management fosters more supportive environment, make employee valued and they become more communicative (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007). According to the majority of the interviewees, due to the lack of communication and the requests for upskilling and training not being heard by the top management and the employer, the work environment is deteriorating. This not only leads to the low commitment and dedication towards the job but also are restricting the Chefs to progress and make them feel invaluable. Upwards communication process not only motivates the Chefs but also make them feel as a valuable employee of the organisation (Chuang et al., 2009) but most of the hospitality organisations still follow the top-down communication process rather than doing it other way around (Zetie et al., 1994) or in other words adopting more open communication process (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007). However, some Chef mentioned that the requests are heard during the meetings but there are no actions taken or communicated yet to the knowledge of the Chef.

It was also relayed in the General Manager's expression that the communication process takes a long time to be implemented.

As mentioned by the majority of the Chefs talent management is a must in the Chef profession. Identifying the right people, providing them with the right job and supplying with the talent is the key aspect of talent management of any business establishment (Baum, 2008). For the smooth operation and swift building of an organisation, recognising the employees, their contribution and harnessing their potential is a key factor (Zetie et al., 1994). Facilitating all staff to engage and upskill their talent by inclusiveness and an open-minded approach to training and development is essential and equivalent as talent identification and acknowledgement (Baum, 2008). Some of the Chefs suggested the similar type of approach in identifying the talent on a timely basis (one chef in six months or a year time) and provide or facilitate them with the education and training so as to improve the skill sets, knowledge assets and make them market competitive. Even though the General Manager emphasises on the importance on training and developing a Chef and updating them, the General Manager also highlighted that the high turnover rate among the chef is the fear factor for every restaurants in being restricted to invest in such talent management process. It is a fact as stated by Baum (2008) that the whole hospitality industry is in need of recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing the individual in line with the array of work to the highest quality possible.

Most of the chefs who took part in the interview pinpointed the training as a ladder in career building process. A suitable environment within the restaurant

sector that supports the continuous learning and skill advancement is very important in motivation of the Chef (Chuang et al., 2009). Trainings not only help one to develop cooking skills and techniques but to grow as a Chef (Palmer et al., 2010) and develop their career at their own pace (Mullen, 2008). To some employers training just limits to the basic food and hygiene training which is a legal requirement for the food handlers in most parts of the world today (Ram et al., 2000). Some Chefs have a strong desire to run their own business in the future which requires them to build their skills and be confident to run the business. Vocational training classes, apprenticeship programmes are very much beneficial in acquiring extra skills like creating menus and running a business (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010). One of the Chef is going to work on a part time basis soon to join the college course despite of financial support from the organisation even though the Chef works to make the living, being the lone bread winner of the family. Some Chefs realises that cross trainings within departments could also be beneficial because cross training could provide the individual to broaden their knowledge and skill set (Zetie et al., 1994). Majority of the Chefs stressed that the restaurants mostly focus in developing the management levels and has no focus in the lower level staffs. Investment in training and development is very much needed within the hospitality sector and specially to be inclusive to all level of the staffs instead of focusing it into the top management levels (Baum, 2008). Because of this left behind nature, there is high level of turnover within the restaurant sector, as mentioned by the majority of the interviewees. However, General Manager suggests that the high turnover rate is the factor that holds the employer investing in the employee development through educational trainings

yet Pratten (2003a) argues that the best method to retain the Chef is through training. However, in the absence of formal training the restaurants provide informal trainings by the senior workers or the restaurant owners in some cases (Ram et al., 2000). Palmer et al., (2010) stated that the Chef Job has many pits but one has to stay focused and bow down until the knowledge is gained. Some Chefs realises that the reality within the profession and the presentation by the media about the profession has misled many but the hard work lies in between where they may or may not get an opportunity to build their skills because to some extent in this profession skills are much more valuable than the qualification (Mullen, 2008).

One of the Chef expressed in an emotional manner about the truth of not being able to see own kids for weeks which is very much depressing in this job due to the unsociable working hours. Pratten (2003a) illustrated how the restaurant business runs during the evenings and the weekends prompting the chefs to adopt unsociable working hours. However, some Chef underpins that it is the nature of the business, so one has to cope with it and it requires hard work and dedication. Palmer et al., (2010) suggests that the profession is not just a simple job but requires focus and determination to overcome the pain of such long hours yet it is also a fact that the Chef job is a closed world due to these long hard working hours and make them apart from this world to be self-socialise. Unsocial working hours is one of the contributing factors in the high turnover rate of the restaurant sector (Chuang et al., 2009) and the interviewee General Manager referred the high turnover rate within the restaurant sector being the catalyst for restricting the owners to invest in the training and development of the chefs.

It is articulated by Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) that the workforce is comparatively low within the hospitality sector than other sectors which puts extra work load to their employees. Majority of the Chef stated that the management does not say but present their view and express in such a way that the staffs are paid to work and they have to work at any situations. Excessive work demand escalates the pressure and stress in the employees (Lo and Lamm, 2005). Some Chefs mentioned of the time when the pressure of kitchen used to emerge even in their dreams but Palmer et al (2010) states that Chef job is demanding, yet is full of reward expresses (Mullen, 2008). Still some Chefs argue that there is no recognition from the employer for doing extra job or taking pressure of the increasing work load. However, General Manager refers to this matter as being flexible with the job and helping each other. It gives a different view from the management perspective to the employee perspective about the work load. Yet some believes that the work load and the pressure could have been decreased if they were equipped with the skills and trainings needed to cope with changing demand and nature of the job.

8. Recommendations

From the study of views of several Chefs and management personnel, the recommendations are as follows;

8.1. Improve the communication gap

Transparent communication clears the ambiguity behind any subject or topics. It not only helps in informing the inquirer but also outlays the positive attribute of the employer/management towards the employee. It makes them feel that they are being taken care of and looked after in that matter. It also helps them to obey their responsibilities and be motivated towards their work at all times.

8.2. Training and updates

It is an utmost necessity of every business organisation of this day to cope with the challenges created by the rapid global change, be it with the technology or the job demands itself. Health consciousness and healthy eating habits puts enormous pressure on Chef these days to come up with healthy cooking ideas. It requires refreshment, training, educational updates and more importantly be competent. Trainings and education facilitates in adapting the change not only to the employees but also to the employers who can then progress simultaneously and overcome the competitive challenges. Chefs should be encouraged in learning through facilitation on their career life-long opportunities and career development. With the help of trainings Chef significantly masters in product development which automatically help in fostering the organisational up build.

8.3. *Improvement in work-life balance*

Due to the economic downturn, it is a fact that several small businesses have cut down budgets on staff and their development. This not only brings negative impact on the job holders but also to those who are willing to embark on this profession. Decreased staff numbers have increased the work pressure which requires extra or longer hours to accomplish the daily duties than before. This leaves the Chef sacrificing their family time. Not only that, it is also hampering to get closer in achieving their aims of life which can be referred to as gaining knowledge and transforming that knowledge in running their own businesses.

8.4. *Talent management programmes*

Not everyone comes with the same level of talent. Some people are good at some jobs and some at other. Identifying the talent in the individual, assigning them with the suitable job and harnessing them with the knowledge required is a must within the restaurant sector. This process not only helps to develop the personal talent but also lifts the overall output of the organisation. A sustainable and consistent work environment needs to be created, as it broadens the creativity.

Having said the above statements, it is true to recommend as per the findings from this particular research and is valid.

9. Conclusion

From the study of the literature reviewed, the restaurant sector is becoming very much competitive without a doubt. Especially the chef profession within the hospitality sector is being very much glamorous and popular in the recent years. There is a whim among the new entrants within this profession due to the glamorous image of the profession presented by the media towards the public. Yet they are unaware of the fact, what lies beneath the profession. It is hugely impacted by the change around the world. To adapt to change is to embark on the progression path. To adapt such changes it requires finance for the organisation and updates within the organisation. To match the requirement of the restaurants (such as human resource development) and the budget allocated is the priority of most of the casual dining restaurants. The spectrum of knowledge is the key for personal and organisational development in this changing world. In order to experience and sustain the growth, maintain the competitive edge it is imminent for Chefs to adapt with the change, keep updated on a timely manner and always be in a position to learn and upskill. This may not be an easy process and may not happen in a day or two. It is possible only when the restaurant employers/managers realise the intensity of knowledge to develop. This could result in better understanding of personal, organisational and communal development. It facilitates in empowering the Chefs, fulfilling their desires to learn and grow and develop professionally. Trainings and educational assistance are those steps in the ladder that not only helps the Chef to grow professionally but also helps in nurturing the talent within the whole hospitality industry. However, this may not bring a sudden change in the working environment such as

the work pressure, long working hours and the motivation towards work. It requires personal dedication, hard work, commitment, patience and the will to learn. Until such factors are looked after there still remains the huge turnover rate within the sector and the Chef profession. People's perception towards the Chef profession as a part time job, a transit profession may never be changed unless the investment not only financially but facilitating with the rotation to avoid the continuous anti-social hours, long hours, lack in career development opportunities and the work load is addressed.

Majority of the Chefs had the similar kind of view about their career progression who illustrated the need of the training to progress further and were eager to learn and develop. The result of the research suggested that, the training and development may to some extent help in motivating the new entrants and also the ones who are already in the profession even though there was nothing mentioned if they were demotivated or highly dissatisfied with the profession. But the factors that were hampering in being transformed and equipped with additional skills were mentioned as the antisocial working hours, long hours, communication gap and work load. The long working hours and antisocial working hours restrict the majority of the Chefs to take the College courses or other vocational qualifications even though they want to pursue such programmes on their own expenses. The most suited practise from both the employer and employee perspectives direct towards the in house trainings/courses which not only help to utilise the off peak hours but also to spare the Chefs/employer without sacrificing their most peak working hours. Among other restricting factors is the financial assistance. It is for the strategic development of the whole organisation and the Chef profession that

such programmes should not only be made easily accessible for the employees of the restaurant but also should find ways in making it affordable. In order to maintain the healthy working environment, effective and prompt communication methods should be adhered to in the restaurants. Majority of the participants expressed the connections between working environment, professional development, motivation and the satisfaction they perceive.

However, the participation of one management employee poured some different views on the topic. These differences in the views make this topic an interesting one for further research. Author realises the need to increase the management participants in order to gain in depth knowledge about the actual strategy of the restaurants. The view shall be poured from the dimensional perspectives of the overall employee and the management of the restaurants. This will help in comparing the information with each other and a rich conclusion can be crafted to make such restaurants a better place to work. It will also be more productive to conduct a study on this topic with a broader variety of participants including the wider geographic locations. Yet there are ways in examining the differences within the topic conducting a quantitative research on the topic.

Thus, this research can conclude with the finding that the training is an essential tool to upgrade and update the Chefs which not only make them competent and marketable but also helps in motivating them. Organisational support is the foremost requirement in fostering the profession and building a healthy working environment.

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1

The interviews were conducted at several locations and the locations and time of the interview were selected by the interviewee. Due to the research being a qualitative research, unstructured interviews were conducted. Even though the interviews were of unstructured nature, researcher was aware of the areas that needed to be covered and most of them were covered during the interview. The interview started with the introduction and background of the interviewee (such as name, age and which geographic location they come from) and the researcher followed the questions with flow of the context to which the interviewee was emphasizing. The following are the questions that came along with the context of the interviews. However, they were not questioned in the sequence as they are listed below;

Interview Questions:

- i. Would you please put some light on your educational or professional background prior to joining this profession?
- ii. What is your current job title?
- iii. How long have you been in your current job?
- iv. What job did you start out with at this restaurant?
- v. What was the source of your inspiration to choose this profession?
- vi. How long have you been with this restaurant?

- vii. If you were to put in words about the satisfaction from the profession you are. How would you describe it?
- viii. The Chef profession is so competitive these days. In today's changing world what are the ways to build you in order to gain the competitive edge?
- ix. In what possible ways could the company help to build your career?
- x. Could you describe how you have found the work environment so far in your career?
- xi. What importance does training bears in building a career as a chef?
- xii. What kind of training programmes could foster the Chefs career like yours?
- xiii. If you were to suggest someone or if someone seeks your suggestion prior to choosing the Chef profession. How would you describe them in detail about this profession?
- xiv. In general, how would you summarise your career so far?
- xv. What have you set your aim as? And have you got any planning so far to make it happen?

Appendix 2:

Interview Schedule:

Interviews were taken at the preferred times and place of the interviewees. The interview lasted from 25 minutes to 1 hour approximately. The interviews were then transcribed at the earliest possible times so as to grasp the fresh memories of the actions during the interview and to generate the themes.

Chef A: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for 35 minutes. Interview was taken on 23/06/2014.

Chef B: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for 26 minutes. Interview was taken on 23/06/2014.

Chef C: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for 25 minutes. Interview was taken on 24/06/2014.

Chef D: Interviewee chose a coffee shop for the interview. The interview lasted for 52 minutes. Interview was taken on 30/07/2014.

Chef E: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for 35 minutes. Interview was taken on 03/08/2014.

Chef F: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for 25 minutes. Interview was taken on 15/07/2014.

Chef G: Interviewee chose their own residence for the interview. The interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes only due to the health condition of the interviewee. Interview was taken on 04/08/2014.

Management Personnel: Interviewee chose the workplace for the interview. The interview lasted for 40 minutes. Interview was taken on 15/07/2014.