National College of Ireland

Exploring line managers (Chefs) sustainable behaviour in restaurants of Dublin under Theory of planned behaviour: a case of study methodology.

MSc Research Project
Master of Science in International Business

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Abstract:

This study examined through the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), how kitchen line managers are engage with sustainable practices. This study intends to explore the effects of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on economic, social and environmental sustainability practices.

A qualitative, interpretive case study methodology, was utilised wherein three independent restaurants, manager by the owner of each place. Head chefs employed were interviewed through semi-structured in-depth interviews. These methodology enabling triangulation, that improving the credibility and validity of the findings and enhances analytical generalisation. Results were interpreted with thematic analysis and triangulated with TPB constructs, TBL pillars and SDG goals.

The results highlight that chefs-intrinsic attitudes significantly govern the work-related practices, such as mental health support, communication, and workplace culture. This is then often fuelled by peer norms. Unfortunately, structural limitations (e.g., inadequate training, lack of owner support) often serve to undermine perceived control. Most economic practices (including local sourcing and resource efficiency) are motivated by cost savings.

We see that food waste reduction, waste separation and energy saving behaviours — which we classified as pro-environmental practices- are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic routes (correlating owner directive), but whose complete adoption is often hindered due to an absence of proper infrastructure and the physical restrictions in terms of storage faculties.

This study therefore demonstrates how personal agency, and institutional barriers operate together in sustainable implementation at a micro (kitchen) level. This indicates that, while attitudes may serve as a foundation for moulding sustainable practices, the absence of institutionalised processes and enabling networks can constrain transformative shifts. This means focusing on sustainability via specific training programs, investment in the right kitchen infrastructure and better alignment of environmental and social metrics with decision making at an operational level.

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Exploring line managers (Chefs) sustainable behaviour in restaurants of Dublin under Theory of planned behaviour: a case of study methodology.

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Acknowledgments:

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Fabian Armendáriz for his support and guidance, his feedbacks and encouragement, allowed me become an effective researcher. The chefs and other restaurant workers who generously dedicated their time and stories, thanks to you all for making this study possible.

I want to thank my family and friends from Mexico and the friendships that I have built in Ireland; for their incredible amount of support and patience, as well as the belief that they all have in me. Thanks you all for all the times that you feed me with love and food, during the last 3 years.

I would like to thank my coworkers and colleagues who always lend a thoughtful ear and inspiration while writing this thesis. Emma, Isi, Margaret thanks you for the time that you dedicate lo listen my project's issues, frustrations and aspirations. Paola thanks for our 50/10 sessions, one of the best memories through this project. Ingrid, thank you for encourage into this project and for the support that you always give to me.

Finally I want to thank you Ivonne because you cannot imagen all the change that the process has bring into my life, hold my thoughts as long as we can.

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her".

John 8:7

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List of Abbreviations.

TPB – Theory of Planned Behaviour
TBL – Triple Bottom Line

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
UN – United Nations

Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the world's most urgent priorities is sustainability, due to the awareness of climate change and the over-exploitation of natural resources and social well-being (FAO, 2019, United Nations, 2015). This global challenge has led to widespread developments across multiple sectors around the world, including hospitality industry and food service sector.

The food system play an important role in this agenda, due to its potential of reducing its footprint though a better efficiency in the production, distribution, and consumption. Therefore, restaurants - one key player of the Food System- are vital to any sustainability strategy toward meeting UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as the SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production, SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth, SDG 3: Good Health and well-being.

However, the literature about how restaurants -in particular their kitchen- characteristics and dynamics determine their sustainable practices is still not explored. Particularly in the hospitality industry, where sustainability has been discussed in terms of corporate policy or consumer behaviour (Gössling et al.,2011; Chou et al.,2018). Relatively little is known about how kitchen line managers make operational decisions that affect the successful translation of sustainability policies into action.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) in explaining how kitchen line managers in Dublin's restaurants, practices social, economic and environmental operational decisions. By integrating the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997), to connect behavioural determinants with sustainability outcomes.

The study aims to address the following research questions from the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework: How do attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, influence the sustainable practices of kitchen line managers in Dublin restaurants? The study will analyse this question, under the lens of the Triple Bottom line pillars, social practices, economic practices and environmental practices.

Using a qualitative, interpretivist case study methodology -in three independent restaurants-designed to focus on kitchen line managers in Dublin restaurants, through semi-structured interviews with head chefs. In order to produce detailed context, dependent insights and thematic analysis based on the ways in which behavioural factors influence structural and cultural constraints on sustainability practices. The methodology allow the comparation of different perspectives, common patterns and context-specific variations. This methodology was choose due to the analytical generalisation, that we can have from small sample, depth, contextual richness, and theoretical contribution (Yin, 2018).

Theoretically, this study extends the utility of TPB to an applied context at a granular operational level within the hospitality sector (kitchen line managers); practically, it offers suggestions for enhancing sustainability implementation within restaurant kitchens via personalized training, needs, analysis support, infrastructure, assistance and organizational policies.

This study makes several contributions to the existing literature on sustainability in the hospitality industry. First, it addresses a critical gap in the food service sector, such as kitchen operation in restaurants. Second, the methodology approach enables a multidimensional analysis that links behavioural determinants, such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control to tangible sustainability outcomes across social, economic, and environmental domains. Third, it offers a deep understanding of particular restaurant in Dublin, but with interpretations and conclusion that can be extended to other geographical settings or industry context.

The chapters that follow in the dissertation comprise: Chapter 2 which provides an integrated review of literature, Chapter 3 which gives an account on methodology, Chapter 4 reports findings, Chapter 5 discusses implications in light of current research and lastly Chapter 6 concludes with policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Theories of Behaviour and Sustainability applied into the hospitality industry.

There are three major theories applied to study the pro-environmental behaviour of employees in hospitality and restaurants, Norm Activation Model (NAM), Value–Belief–Norm (VBN) Theory and Theory of planned behaviours. Norm Activation Model (NAM), this model relied in the individual awareness of the consequence of the actions so that, if the individual know that an action is going to cause an environmental damage, the individual will act to avoid that damage. The Value–Belief–Norm (VBN) Theory, indicates that when one person has the value and belief that they must do something in a certain way they would do it, because they will get the sensation that they are doing the right. Altruistic and pro-biosphere-care values lead the actions of these individuals. Finally, the Theory of planned behaviours claim that there are three main motivations for the individual to act how they act, these motivations are attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. This theory has been widely used to analyse the behaviour of individuals in the hospitality industry (Meng *et al*., 2022; Toshima and Bokhoree, 2024)

Theory of Planned Behaviour was proposed by Ajzen and has emerged as a highly popular socio-psychological theory for examining behavioural intentions across various research fields (Savari, 2023). The theory proposes that behavioural intention is -the wiliness of the subject to perform an action- and this can be shaped by three global factors, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Meng *et al*., 2022).

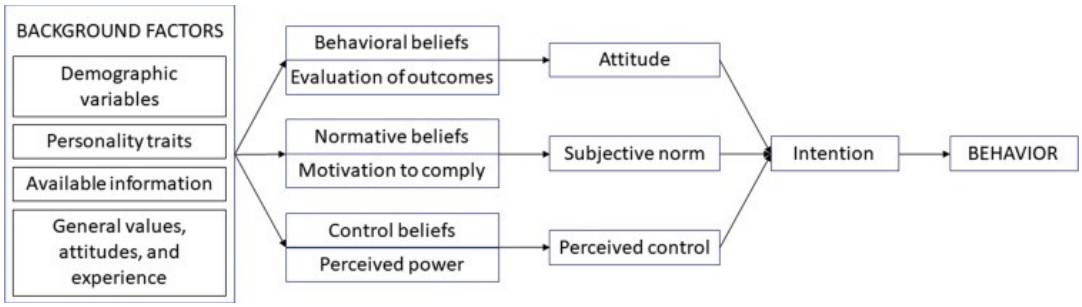

Figure 1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour Adapted from Ajzen (Etheridge et al.,2023).

Attitude toward the behaviour refers to an individual's personal evaluation of the behaviour, in this stage the individua ask if the action is good or bad. Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure from important people, in this second stage the individua ask what other important people expect from the individual to do. Perceived behavioural control reflects the individual's confidence in their ability to perform the behaviour, which includes the availability of resources, knowledge, or opportunity (Meng *et al*., 2022).

In their research, Meng *et al.,* (2022) highlight that individual tends to search for reasons to justify and defend behaviours, these reasons help in the develop confidence in the perform behaviour. Analysing these actions for sustainable

behaviour, can be helpful to underhand employees' sustainable behaviour's. Meng et *al.,* (2022) mention that there are three reason to perform a sustainable behaviour: social benefit, environmental benefit and economic benefit whereas the three reasons against sustainable behaviour are: Cost Barriers, Workload Increase Barriers and Lack of Support.

In their study Toshima and Bokhoree (2024), they extend the pillars of the TPB, the first pillar, attitude, has a reinforcement with Environmental Commitment, Environmental Concerns, Environmental consciousness the second pillar Subjective norm, is enhance with behavioural intention and the third pillar Perceived behavioural control is enhance with Environmental knowledge.

TPB model provides a more nuanced understanding of how various psychological and contextual elements shape individuals' intentions and actions toward sustainability (Toshima and Bokhoree (2024). For Vavrova, J. *et al*., (2024), the behavioural; intention is the stronger predictor of actual pro-environmental behaviour.
In their study, Olya *et al.,* (2019), identify that positive environmental attitudes, is the TPB factor necessary to achieve the desired behavioural responses from green hotel guests.

Philosophy of sustainable business.

In 1990, John Elkington proposed the Three Bottom Line, a concept to measure the business success not only considering the profit, but also how the company treat people and how they affect the planet. The objective of the concept was to increase the awareness of the companies of their impact into the society, lessen their negative impact and initiate balance response to these three main pillars (Singh and Dutt 2023).

The Theory aim highlight the companies' necessity of perform responsible attitudes toward society and the environment; economic (financial benefit), social (corporate participation in community contribution), and environmental (performing environmental preservation efforts) objectives should be balanced and met for corporate sustainable management (Shim *et al.,* 2021).

The global initiatives, about sustainable practices, have led to the widespread adoption of sustainability across industries and businesses worldwide (Minutiello *et al.,*2024). Minutiello *et al.,* (2024) also discuss the difficulty for companies in including these goals in their operations, as they require specialized knowledge, money, and resources. Even though many businesses agree that the SDGs are important, they face challenges when adapting their daily work to fit these goals properly.

For Toshima and Bokhoree (2024), industries need to give top priority to their focus on sustainability to ensure a long-term survival of their businesses while meeting customers' expectations. Lewicka, D. and Starowicz-Rajca (2022) claim that reduce environmental impact in the business, also result in cost savings for the organization.

For Shim et *al.,* 2021 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has their principal weight in the operation of the companies, this framework englobe policies that pursuit social values. Moosa, A and He, F., 2023 refer to corporate sustainability (CS) as an organisational strategy to align environmental responsibilities and business

performance, for them CS has as a core component environmental Management Practices (EMPs) and it is important include CSR initiatives in employee orientation and training programmes; moreover internal environmental policies, audits, and green procurement policies are tools that help in the measure of the implementation of these techniques.

For Bui and Filimonau (2021) in the food sector, it's possible to implement sustainable practices and enhance the well-being of the community. For example, employee people with disabilities, support the social pilar; support local providers and bet for seasonal food on the menu can enhance the economy of the community. However, sometimes the sector of food services providers is derived by business needs and sustainability is not taking into consideration. Bui and Filimonau (2021) also highlight how the food sector can be more profitable when they are ailing with many environmental and (wider) societal obligation.

The increasing pressure of customers, customers associations and non-governmental association have encourage the application of sustainable practices in the hospitality sector, some of the large hotel chains such as Hilton o Marriott, have started to implement sustainable practices that encourage saving energy and water, but also reducing waste, foodservice outlets that actions minimise their operational costs, thus prompting business investment in this sustainability area For Bui and Filimonau (2021).

Sustainability Development Goals a Framework to evaluate sustainability in the hospitality industry.

In September 2015 de United Nation, proposed The United Nations Agenda 2030, a global plan of action for sustainable development, this was signed by all United Nation Member States. This was the first time that the term "sustainability" gained truly global recognition (Bui and Filimonau, 2021). This global scheme incorporating 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets addressing global challenges of climate change, social inequality and environmental degradation, minimizing resource consumption, reducing waste, and ensure the responsible use of natural resource.The SDGs involve everyone—governments, G20 countries, businesses and civil society organisations around the world to work together to create and share prosperity in a sustainable way (Lewicka and Starowicz-Rajca, 2023).

Figure 2 Sustainable development goals

These objectives, coupled with increased societal awareness, stakeholder pressure, stringent environmental norms, and the need to remain competitive in the business market, have demanded environmentally friendly practices from industrial communities. The overall objective is that the goals should be fulfilled—on a global scale—by 2030, which requires regional or even local fulfilment of the goals (Carlsen and Bruggemann, 2022). The SDG framework is the first comprehensive global effort to harmonize relevant data around a wide variety of topics related to sustainable development (Van Tulder *et al.,* 2021).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Triple Bottom Line (TBL) frameworks suits for the research of hospitality-specific sustainable behavioural. Although other models, such as the Norm Activation Model, Behavioural Reasoning Theory and Stakeholder Theory provide useful complementary perspectives, each has its limitations: they focus too much on moral obligation; lack predictive power at the level of individual decision-making; or privilege organisational-level reporting over operational practices. Unlike these, TPB (Ajzen 1991) has found its widespread use in sustainable behaviours prediction (Olya *et al.*, 2019; Meng et a*l.,* 2022) within the hospitality and tourism realm, offering a sound framework of how managerial practices are shaped by attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural control. TBL (Elkington, 1998) is well entrenched in the sustainability literature in hospitality (Bui and Filimonau, 2021; Shim *et al.,*2021), is further informative as it conveniently arranges a range of practises into social, economic and environmental pillars that specifically align with this study. Together, TPB and TBL allow study and exploration of behavioural drivers as well as sustainability outcomes at the same time; explaining depth and analytical breadth.

Previous studies about Sustainable Behaviour in hospitality under Theory of Behaviour.

The hospitality sector contributes positively to socio-economic development of a country, so that environmentally practices have to be applied in the hospitality industry. The hospitality sector contributes to the deterioration of the environment due to the use of resources and the manage to them. Even corporate sustainability has been started to apply into the hospitality industry there are still ignorance of legislation, lack of environmental monitoring and reporting. (Moosa, A. and He, F. ,2023).

From the point of view of Singh and Dutt (2023), there are different challenges that the hospitality can face regarding to awareness, implementation, and reporting around SDG initiatives. When it refers to hospitality, sometime the incitive can be seen as greenwashing due a lack of trust in organization sustainable commitments, in its study within luxury hotels in Dubai, they analyse that sometimes for this kind of hotels is more difficult to implement sustainable practices because additional training in sustainable practices can increase costs for organizations, not all the personal is aware of the sustainable practices that they can realise in the hotel. Moreover, sustainability can be perceived as negatively affecting service quality, that originates brand misconception, and highlight need for further policies.

Nevertheless, in these Dubai Hotels they show an adoption of initiatives related to energy savings, water conservation, recycling, reduction of single-use plastic (Singh and Dutt, 2023). They also evidence that the engagement with SDGs was influenced by size of the hotel, ownership model, international affiliation influence, and hospitality regulation.

According with Karatepe *et al*.,(2022), if staff, and particularly senior staff, are unaware of the SDGs or how best to implement them, the likelihood of any form of successful implementation becomes increasingly unlikely. Hotels need the energy of its employees to implement green tasks and only green work-engaged employees, would contribute to the company through their Pro E environmental Behaviours. They suggested that employees feel more appeal to take green behaviours when they can see a green leadership, green climate, it means that the hotel really care about the environment and green Human Resources policies.

For Moosa, A. and He, F. ,(2023), High levels of environmental consciousness and contribution will enable businesses to adopt the (Environmental management practices) EMP effectively and then help them gain social credibility by retaining stakeholder satisfaction to ensure operational sustainability within the hospitality industry. The competitiveness of the hospitality and tourism sector depends heavily on the skills and qualifications of its employees (Silva *et al.,* 2025).

For Silva *et al.,* (2025), sustainable practices in hospitality are becoming more important nowadays, and there are more regulations an guidelines that have been developed that is the case of the Pact for Next Tourism Generation Skills Project (PANTOUR 2024) that include the green and social skills that have to be implemented by 2030 to assure sustainability in the industry. Green skills promote understanding of

environmental issues and sustainable practices, such as resource conservation, waste management, and pollution reduction (Silva *et al.,* 2025).

Vavrova, J. *et al.,* (2024), studied the pro-environmental behaviours (PEB) in tourist accommodation providers in Slovakia. They analysed the existing barriers to adopting sustainability practices, taking into consideration the stakeholders' attitudes towards sustainability. They found a common believe between "incorporate sustainable measures into hotel's operations tend to have lower operational expenses", however they also found the believe that "sustainable practices have high initial costs and slow returns" and the pro-environmental relies in the attitude that the owners and managers of the hotel have towards sustainable practices, the size of the hotels and the transparency that they have.

Toshima and Bokhoree (2024), suggest that effectively deal with environmental degradation, the hospitality industry must be focus in preserving water and energy, recycling, reducing waste, decreasing carbon emissions using sustainable products and services.

During their study Silva *et al.,* (2025), observed that most of the green skills are taught and practiced by individuals but due to individualistic values, cultural status and moral obligation. These internal motivations are their care for the environment and their moral beliefs, however the study also highlight the importance of the external influences such as workplace practices. Even more, some of them felt frustrated or powerless when their values clashed with workplace realities.

In their study Toshima and Bokhoree (2024), mentioned that well- informed hotel guests can make informed pro-environmental decision, so they analysed the pro-environmental behaviour PEB, (which refers to concrete individual-level actions, aims to promote environmental sustainability) of hotel guesses'. They used the TPB to understand factors influencing intentions and behaviours in the tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors, especially in environmental signification behaviours.

Ireland's practices to achieve sustainability in hospitality

In 2022, under the framework of "Sustainable Development Goals", Ireland outperformed the EU average on several socioeconomic measures, Ireland demonstrate a significant advance targeting the SDG 1, with lower income inequality, SDG 8 with fewer Irish young people aged 19–25 were not in employment, education or training, SDG 10 with the total income of the richest 20% was four times that of the poorest 20% in Ireland, SDG 12 with Ireland's material footprint was lower than the EU average. From this stage Ireland created the new plan (2022–2024) to guide Ireland's actions and keep making progress toward the SDGs, improvising and expanding efforts in areas that need more attention. (CSO), 2024.

Ecotourism Ireland has adopted Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Criteria to be used in Ireland by accommodations and tour operators to ensure that they are working under standards for sustainability. Currently, 11 destination, 30 hotel and 30 tour operators have achieved GSTC-Recognized status. Considering that restaurants can also adversely affect the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage GSTC is working on develop of new criteria that will serve as the industry's global

sustainability standards for tourism-related food service providers. This criterial aim to manage kitchens and dining facilities and services more sustainably (GSTC, 2021, 2023). With these new criteria they consider food sustainability closely linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns), Goal 14 (Life Below Water), and Goal 15 (Life on Land).

According with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) during the first quarter of 2024, the combined Distribution, Transport, Hotels & Restaurants sector contributed 12.24% of Ireland's Gross Value-Added (CSO), 2024. The restaurant sector is an integral part of Ireland's tourism and hospitality sector. In the first quarter of 2023, 125,400 workers were employed in the Food & Beverage Services sector. Between the first quarter of 2013 and the first quarter of 2023, employment in the sector increased by 59.5 per cent. This employment is spread throughout the countryside, and the sector in general makes a very strong contribution to regional and rural economic activity and employment (Restaurants Association of Ireland, 2024). The association of restaurants In Ireland has a posture against the ecological impact of restaurants and other food businesses; with the generation of food waste, accounting for 10% of all man-made greenhouse gas emissions. The association encourage their member to apply sustainable practices.

In the study Singh and Dutt (2023), they analyse the adoption of the sustainable development goals into the hospitality industry and they find that Goal 3: Good health and well-being; Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, Technology and Infrastructure; Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation and Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production; are related to social, economic and ecological sustainable practices respectively into de hospitality industry.

-Identified gaps and critical synthesis.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is an effective paradigm for analysing sustainable hospitality. The theory claims that employees act accordance with their Behavioural believes, Subjective Norms and Perceived Control Toshima and Bokhoree (2024), (Meng *et al.,* 2022). The industry of Hospitality represents for Ireland an important player of its GDP and working in strategies such as Global Sustainable Tourism Council and developing standards for tourism-related food service providers, help in the achievement of compliance and help to the business to increase profit, reduce waste and gain a competitive advantage (CSO, 2024).

The triple Bottom line as a philosophy of sustainable business, englobe economic, social and environmental responsible attitudes that the business must do embrace in order to being sustainable. In the restaurant sector, it's possible to analyse the attitudes towards sustainability if we link it to the SDG-3, SDG-9 and SDG-12.

As member of the Union Nacion's, Ireland is working under the framework of Sustainable Development Goals to demonstrate its sustainability. The compliance with these objectives can enforce Ireland quality of life and attract investors and cooperations with a sustainable culture; in general, achieving these objectives help in the creation of a sustainable economy. For the restaurant sector Ireland is working

with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) to achieve a sustainable hospitality industry.

That is why using the Theory of Planned Behaviour, linked with SDG and Triple Bottom Line, into the kitchen's restaurant sector in Ireland, using a qualitative approach, can help us to understand the motivations behind a sustainable behaviour of those who must actively implement sustainable practices as part of their daily work — not just report compliance, but truly engage with these behaviours in practice and enforce the philosophy of sustainable business.

The hospitality context and human behaviour mechanisms are transferable to employee settings, especially where environmental behaviour is concerned. Most of the studies related to pro-environmental behaviours using the Theory of Planned Behaviour have been conducted into the hospitality industry, under a quantitative approach, within administrative personal and manager of the hotels.

The literature review suggested limited research on restaurant sector, within line managers under a qualitative approach. That's why this study aims to analyse what is Head Chefs behaviour towards sustainability in the Irish restaurant sector linking it to specific targets of the sustainability goals 3, 9 and 12: 3.4 Mental Health and Well-being, 3.9 Reduce Harm from Pollution, 9.2 Promote inclusive and Sustainable industrialization, 9.4 Upgrade Industry and Infrastructure for sustainability for economic behaviour and 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Waste separation and 12.5 Reduction of plastic.

By finding what they believe about sustainability, we can analyse the motives that lead them to perform their duties. The core of the restaurant industry are their employees it is in their hands where sustainability can act. Find their motivations towards sustainability, can help the industry to implement sustainable strategies.

Research Questions

Many of the studies that analyse the behaviour of the employees towards sustainability have been conducted in hotels, into these hotels there are policies related to sustainability, or they have implemented sustainability practices, such as environmental management practices, corporate sustainability and reporting, into their daily activities. In these hotels there is also a factor that influence their behaviour, the influence of the guesses' perception. Most of the studies have been conducted under quantitative methodology, analysing the level of knowledge of these sustainable practices by employees. On the other hand, those that have used a qualitative methodology, conducted interviews towards functional manager. This figures into the organization have the responsibility to answer in accordance with the hotel policies.

These studies aim to analyse the employee's behaviour in the hospitality industry in the restaurant sector in Dublin, where they don't work under obliged sustainable practices. Considering that hospitality industry has a hight contribution to Ireland's Gross Value-Added, according with the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2024).

The chefs are the core, into the restaurant sector; the figure of the head chef as the line manager in the restaurant's kitchens can help us to identify real sustainable believes and practices towards sustainability. Finding these motivations, the sector can implement sustainable strategies. In this sense The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is an effective paradigm for analysing hospitality sustainability. The theory claims that employees act accordance with their Behavioural believes: If they believe that their behaviour is good or important. Subjective Norms: If they feel social pressure to do it because others expect it. Perceived Control: If they think it's easy or hard to do. In this sense, in these sense this study aims to identify:

General Objective: Identify how do personal attitudes, perceived social expectations, and perceived behavioural control, influence the sustainable behaviour of kitchen line managers in Dublin's restaurants, when they are not required to follow mandatory sustainability practices, according with the Theory of planned behaviour.

To achieve that objective, we aim to analyse the corelation between Theory of planned behaviour and Triple Bottom Line performance through the lens of SDGs 3, SDGs12 and SDGs 9, based on TBL pillars: environmental, societal, and economic.

Objective Specific 1 (social lens): Identify the social practices implemented in each unit of analysis, through answer Question 1: How the social practices of kitchen line managers in Dublin's restaurants are influenced by attitudes, norms, and perceived control, as outlined in the Theory of Planned Behaviour?

-Kitchen Line managers will be questioned about their societal performance using the targets 3.4 Mental Health and Well-being, 3.9 Reduce Harm from Pollution, for social behaviour.

Objective Specific 2 (economic lens): Identify the economic practices implemented in each unit of analysis, through answer Question 2: How the economic practices of kitchen line managers in Dublin's restaurants are influenced by attitudes, norms, and perceived control, as outlined the Theory of Planned Behaviour?

-Kitchen Line managers will be questioned about their economic performance using the targets 9.2 Promote inclusive and Sustainable industrialization, 9.4 Upgrade Industry and Infrastructure for sustainability for economic behaviour.

Objective Specific 2 (environmental lens): Identify the economic practices implemented in each unit of analysis, through answer Question 3: How the pro-environmental practices of kitchen line managers in Dublin's restaurants are influenced by attitudes, norms, and perceived control, as outlined the Theory of Planned Behaviour?

-Kitchen Line managers will be questioned about their pro-environmental performance using the targets 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Waste separation, 12.5 Reduction of plastic.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy and Approach to theory development

This study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, recognizing reality as a social construction that is shaped by the environment and the personal experiences of the individual. Interpretivism is well-suited to understanding the different realities of the chefs in the kitchen, even when them work in similar environment. The way how each one face their challenges depend on their personal experiences and backgrounds and interactions with different people inside the kitchen. Therefore, interpretivism is appropriate for exploring complex and context-dependent human behaviours, that is the case of the sustainable practices applied in restaurant kitchens, where motivations and actions vary based on individual and social factors, including manager, owner, customers and co-workers.

An inductive approach to theory development is employed. Rather than beginning with predefined hypotheses, the research collects qualitative data to allow findings to emerge directly from participants' accounts. To analyse how the chefs attempt to make sense the word around them; with the information that we collected we aim to build understanding about the sustainable behaviour in the kitchens. This approach allows rich exploration theory from qualitative insights, particularly appropriate for exploratory work guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework.

3.2 Research Strategy and Design

For this study, they were analysed the use of the next methodologies. Quantitative survey, this could be done through questionnaires that would be designed using the TPB constructs-attitudes, norms, perceived control- and sustainable practices of kitchen line managers across Dublin . While it provides a large dataset for statistical comparison, it does not gather nuanced contextual understanding or sociocultural insight on decision-making. The information it would be reach on statistics, but with lack on insight about real performance in the unit of analysis.

Mixed methods, it will consist in administer surveys at scale while leveraging on-depth interviews or focus groups. While it provides value in terms of allowing cross-validation and richer interpretation of the results, it is more time-consuming, resource-intensive, and requires careful integration between qualitative and quantitative findings. Ethnographic study, under this methodology, the researcher spends long hours in the kitchens watching how chefs move and act. While still providing a rich data base, within-context perspective of workplace behaviours, this technique is labour-intensive, expensive and the presence of the researcher can affect participants behaviour. Although it would help if the objective were the study of all the restaurant.

Longitudinal study: Under this methodology, a number of kitchens were followed for an extended period to forecast changes in practices and behaviours. That makes it able to pinpoint cause-effect relationships, but it is time-consuming and participant fatigue might lead some drop out. Secondary data analysis, this is based on data sources that already exist (e.g. government inspections, sustainability reports or waste

audits). This methodology could be cheaper, faster, but fallback to the quality and quantity of the data used and it precludes direct insight from chefs on their perceptions and motivations. Alieng with the lack of information in a data base of the Dublin restaurants.

That is the reason why a qualitative research approach was adopted, to facilitate an in-depth understanding and analysis of the context-dependent behaviour of the head chefs that cannot be fully understood through quantitative measurement alone, because it depends on multiple particularities that this study aims to explore. Moreover, sustainability in each unit of analysis remains a relatively recent social issue, with limited existing data for quantitative research. Therefore, a qualitative case study was chosen given the exploratory nature of the research question addressed in this study and the need to capture the depth and richness of life experiences of the participants.

A case study design was selected, as it facilitates a detailed examination of a specific group— in this case, head chefs—as they interact with environmental, social, and economic practices in their real-life setting. A case study approach is particularly suited because it enables a depth understanding of a context dependent phenomenon, where the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2018). In this study, the phenomenon under examination is the sustainable behaviour of restaurant kitchens, which cannot be fully understood without considering their specific cultural and organizational context.

The method allowed investigation of the situated practices by which head chefs make sense of, value and act upon sustainability in their professional lives. Head chefs were selected as the unit of analysis since they are part that has general control in the kitchen area, and therefore directly answerable for carry out lasting practice.

The research focuses on three unit of analysis - Dublin-based restaurant kitchen- analysing how kitchen line managers, interpret, value, and act upon sustainability within their workplace. Therefore, this research adopts a multiple case study design, as it examines more than one case, enabling a richer identification of the phenomenon and its patterns, through the comparison of the similarities and differences of the research question down three different contexts.

Finally, the study adopts a cross-sectional design, capturing insights at a single point in time, specifically practices and experiences of the head chefs in three specific Dublin´s restaurants. For the purposes of this academic research, we only want to concentrate in the present time and resources constraints.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

This study employed an opportunistic sampling strategy based on the participants availability and willingness to participate of each unit of analysis. This approach was chosen given the informal nature of the hospitality sector, the absence of centralized records, and the anticipated lack of responses that might be obtain if we launch an open invitation to the chef community. Therefore, individuals who were responsible for sustainability initiatives in kitchen restaurants of Dublin were contacted and asked to participate.

Participants were recruited through personal invitation and explanation of the research that it will be conducted. Although opportunistic sampling may limit generalizability, it is appropriate for this exploratory qualitative research aiming to uncover patterns and insights based on lived experience instead of statistical representation.

The inclusion criteria for participants were:

- Unit of analysis operating under the owner command.
- Unit of analysis not working under specific or rigid sustainable regulations.
- Full time head chefs in a restaurant of Dublin.
- With at least 5 years of experience working as a head chef in restaurants.

All the restaurants chosen are in the city centre of Dublin. They are independent and with the owner in charge of all the decisions in the business. Each has between 25 and 30 tables to serve customers and have both local and tourist customers. While they are registered in the Dublin' Restaurants Association, they do not work down any specific sustainability regulation.

To promote that head chefs express their sustainable practices more openly and widely, the research will keep in anonymity the name of the restaurants and chefs that are taking part in this study. However, each specialises in a different type of cuisine:

1. Restaurant 1, specialising in French food.

2. Restaurant 2, specialising in Irish food.

3. Restaurant 3, specialising in Italian food.

These restaurants were selected because they represent the profile of an average Dublin restaurant in terms of size, price range and whit typical customers base from the city, ensuring that the findings are more generalizable within the Dublin restaurant sector. Moreover, the fact that the selected restaurants offer different types of cuisine—French, Irish, and Italian — allows the exploration of sustainability practices across different culinary traditions.

The Table 1 shows the summary of the characteristics of the participants, as well as information about their respective restaurants.

Table 1 Summary of Interview Participants

Participant	Gender	Years of Experience as Head Chef.	Reviews in Google	Restaurant's location
1	Male	7 years	4.6	D9
2	Male	8 years	4.5	D1
3	Female	21 years	4.6	D7

3.4 Research Method and Instrument

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, as this method enables rich, detailed responses while it keeps adherence to scope of this research. The interviews were designed following an inductive approach, appropriate for generating insight from the participants rather than testing predefined hypotheses. This approach allows a wide flexibility in exploring personal beliefs (attitudes), perceived social expectations (subjective norms), and the perceived ease or difficulty of sustainable behaviour (perceived behavioural control) based on the TPB.

Interviews were voice recorded, with participant consent, in their property. Interviews lasted approximately 60 min and were transcribed verbatim before being analysed. Participants were asked thirty-five broad questions related to sustainability and their kitchens. Questions were open-ended to allow participants to express their experiences and perceptions freely. Interview questions were structured around the components of TPB and linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- SDG 12 - Environmental practices (e.g. food waste, waste separation, plastic reduction)
- SDG 3 - Social practices (e.g. mental well-being and safety),
- SDG 9 - Economic practices (e.g. sustainable innovation and partnerships)

Additional probing questions were asked to explore participants' answers more thoroughly.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which enable rich and detailed responses to explore attitudes, subjective norms and behaviour of the participants.

Interviews were conducted in either English, Spanish or Portuguese, depending on the preference of the participant, this is important given the cosmopolitan nature of Dublin and aimed to maximise the authenticity of the responses. They were held in neutral, quiet settings (Dublin Central Library) to minimise distractions. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis, using word transcript.

The interview guide included 35 open-ended questions, divided in 6 different sections addressing:

- Understanding their attitude (Personal Beliefs/Values) towards sustainability.
- Understanding person's influence their sustainable behaviour.
- Understanding the control that they have in the restaurant to implement sustainable practices.
- Examples of ecological practices in the restaurant.
- Examples of social practices in the restaurant.
- Examples of economic practices in the restaurant.

Due to the semi-structured format of the interviews, participants were not restricted, and they could express their points of view the way they wanted, thus providing more profound insights into unexpected themes. The whole interview can be analysed in the context of sustainable practices and behaviour of the chefs.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using content analysis, where transcripts were read multiple times to look for underlying themes and ideas. These ideas were then grouped into related themes and sub-themes for each individual case before looking into cross-cases analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the interview data.

1. Familiarization with the data through active reading

Work with the transcription of the interviews, allow to recognise some patters in the speech of each chef, some on the answer give insights about more than one sustainable pillar, whereas other pointed to a different part of the theory of planned behaviour.

2. Generated initial codes inductively (without a pre-existing coding frame)

During the transcription, notes were taken when each chef comment about sustainability and applications. It was easy to identify how they feel about their activities in their restaurant, thanks to the tone of the voice and the emotion that we put in their speech.

3. Grouped codes into broader themes

Using the infrastructure of the library, a mental map was builder with the initial findings, organized in the stablish framework. The fragments of the interview related to each topic were putting together.

4. Reviewed and refined themes based on recurrence and relevance.

Once we have a visual access to the information, organized accordance with the TPB and TBL, identify findings and match it with the literature review, was the most difficult part, because many of the chef understand as sustainability, just pro-environmental practices and they tend to focus only in that part. The section 5, 6 and 7 were analysed under de framework of the TPB.

5. Organized and named final themes

Using a colours coding, the findings were organized according with TBL (sections 2-3-4) and TPB (sections 5-6-7), general context (sections 1-8)

6. Reported findings with illustrative quotes

We agger the information according with the frameworks and the quotations previously organized, to be able to demonstrate the behaviour of each chef in each study case.

This inductive approach ensured that the themes emerged from the data itself rather than being imposed by pre-existing theory.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the recording of the interview. They were inform about the use of the information for the research proposes, prior to data collection. They were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. We will name the participants as chef 1, 2 and 3. Any identifying information was removed from transcripts.

The study complied with the university's ethical review process and was conducted in line with the principles of voluntary participation, transparency, and data protection under GDPR regulations.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Limitations

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed member checking by sending the final transcription of each interview via WhatsApp to the participants for their review and validation. During the interviews notes where taking, when key ideas about the research were mentioned. After each interview out of recording, chefs enforce their stand about some practices in the restaurant, which allows us to reinforce them answers. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured with the objective of encourage the participants to do not omit any information that could be value.

The study has several limitations. The first one includes the small, non-random sample, which may not reflect the experiences of all Chefs behaviour. However, the experience that they have working on restaurants before, and the behaviours are traceable. Second, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability of capture temporal variations or long-terms changes in sustainability attitudes and practices. Third, participants' responses may have been shaped by personal bias or their answers expectation related to their own sustainability behaviour rather than reflecting their actual practices. Finally, the research particularly focuses on three Dublin restaurants, and therefore the findings may not be extended to other geographical or cultural contexts.

Future research could address this limitation by employing longitudinal design, larger sampler, randomization, and multi-site studies across different counties and contexts that may depth the understanding of the findings here founded.

Chapter 4: Findings (Case study narratives) and analysis

There are explained findings about the actions that Ireland is developing in accordance with “Environmental Protection Agency” to promote sustainability and waste reduction in the hospitality sector. Further on there are described the findings per unit of analysis that offer an operational context for kitchen line managers that is shaped by organisational practices and market conditions.

Social Pillar

A national reduction initiative in Ireland has also highlighted the importance of public awareness and social norms as determinants in shaping behaviour on food waste across hospitality. Things like public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives and the work to promote sustainable food practices are not designed only to help create a cultural shift toward waste prevention (Environmental Protection Agency, 2023). Measures such as the Food Waste Charter are voluntary, but food businesses can pledge to measure, report and act on waste reduction, thereby reinforcing subjective norms recommended by SDG 12.3 (United Nations n.d.).

Economic Pillar

The policy framework also supports financial imperatives for food waste reduction. Using standard measurement protocols and tools from the Environmental Protection Agency (2023) can assist businesses in realizing cost savings by reducing overproduction, stock management, and simplifying procurement. While these measures can directly enhance operational efficiency themselves in the hospitality sector they also contribute indirectly to the European Union Waste Framework Directive (European Commission, 2018) due to Ireland needing to reduce food waste by 30% by 2030, with a proposed mandatory ban on commercial food waste from landfill soon to be in place as part of these ambitious targets.

Environmental Pillar

At the environmental level, Ireland's obligations are enshrined in international and EU agreements. Being a signatory of the UN Sustainable Development Goal, the country is committed to reducing per capita food waste at retail and consumer levels by half by 2030 (United Nations, n.d.). In national stroke care strategies, efforts are being made to decrease the environmental effect of the hospitality sector, primarily through reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from food waste decomposition, and through a more sustainable use of resources.

Case 1

This chef that works in this kitchen do not have previous experience in a kitchen until he comes to all the knowledge that he has acquiree along the years has been only in one place. This can be one of the factors that limit the control that he has in his kitchen.

SECTION 2 – ATTITUDE (Personal Beliefs/Values)

Social Pillar: Chef 1 has implemented a system in his kitchen to reduce stress levels for himself and his team. He prepares food before his shift, prioritising a calm working environment. For him, the key is not feeling under stress, which is why he introduced this strategy to save both time and energy during busy periods.

"I feel that something which has really helped me is knowing that I have everything ready, so I can arrive and cook when I want to, without wasting my time."

Economic Pillar: In this kitchen, the chef focuses on saving energy by using utensils and equipment for more than one purpose. This approach optimises energy use and allows him to deliver products with all the desired qualities for customers. He also acknowledges that these actions make the kitchen more efficient and faster.

"So I feel that we no longer do that, and instead we only use the hot plate that is already hot throughout the whole day — not so much for economic reasons, but because we know it would be a waste otherwise."

Environmental Pillar: The chef emphasises that his team shares a strong belief in avoiding food waste: *"Everyone feels a sense of guilt when it comes to wasting food. Everyone."*

He recognises that his sustainable practices are influenced by the restaurant owner, yet he believes that his kitchen maintains a number of environmentally conscious procedures. *"That's right, and he also avoids wasting resources — in this case, energy." "Often I don't even write that hour down, because I'm doing it for my own reasons; because it matters to me, you know?"*

As head chef, he feels responsible for suggesting better kitchen practices. However, he does not have the authority to implement them, as the final decisions rest with the owner. *"How to put it… with the pressure we also get from the restaurant owner."*

SECTION 3 – SUBJECTIVE NORMS (Social Pressures/Influences)

Social Pillar: The chef explains that his team's strong belief in avoiding food waste empowers them to organise food preparation according to their own timing and knowledge, even when this differs from the owner's instructions.

"Yes, especially the owner — he clearly doesn't want us to waste food, that's the first thing — but at the same time, he tells us to cook more, to cook a lot more during the week so that you save time at the weekend… Well, he doesn't know, he doesn't work in the kitchen, so he can't manage that kind of thing, and we handle it ourselves."

The chef also admits to being strongly influenced by friends who work in other kitchens, as sharing experiences and techniques has helped him to improve his own practices.

“I have many friends who work in kitchens, obviously in different types of cuisine and doing different kinds of things, but yes, we talk about these things because I want to improve as well.” “In this case, I really feel that it helps a lot — it has helped me to improve.”

Economic Pillar: According to the chef, the main influence in conserving resources is the restaurant owner, whose focus on reducing costs drives the chef to be more creative and to work with fewer resources.

“It’s always the restaurant owner — what he wants is not to spend money. Clearly, the goal is to generate the greatest possible amount of money with the smallest possible amount of resources, and of course, he’s the owner.”

Environmental Pillar: The chef notes that customers influence both the timing and the quality of food preparation. Diners expect to be served quickly, and they also expect food to be fresh and never stored in the fridge for more than three days.

“And clearly I think it’s the customers, one hundred per cent, purely because of the timing.”
“I feel the pressure because people expect to eat something fresh that hasn’t been cooked more than three days ago.”

SECTION 4 – PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL (Ease or Difficulty of Action)

Social Pillar: The chef shows a genuine commitment to providing high-quality products in his restaurant. He ensures that food is stored for a maximum of two days, understanding that customer safety is his responsibility. On the third day after preparation, he has the authority to discard the food.

“I will not sell something that is not in suitable hygienic conditions to sell.” “It’s only because I don’t want to waste that sort of thing, and because I know — I insist — that the next day I won’t have the pressure of having to do that first thing when I arrive, you understand?”
“If it’s finished, it’s finished. It’s removed from the menu; if the customer asks, it’s not in stock.”

Despite pressure from the owner to keep all menu items available at all times, which increases workload and stress, the chef would ideally prefer to maintain only the necessary stock and limit availability as needed.

Economic Pillar: Chef 1 does not have control over improving the restaurant’s economy in larger investments, such as purchasing more efficient kitchen equipment. The limited space in the kitchen also restricts his ability to maintain food quality. He points out the waste of time and resources caused by the owner’s demands. Even with these limitations, he manages small actions that positively affect the restaurant’s economy: preparing and storing food on the day it arrives and keeping track of

upcoming events (such as concerts or matches) to plan stock efficiently and avoid waste.

“I know I’d rather stay, I don’t know, half an hour longer to wash, cut and store them than leave them out, because I know they’ll be wasted.” “We waste a lot — many preparations take a lot of time, and buying that vegetable or that item costs a lot of money.” “My boss has an Excel sheet that, since opening, lists every day what is sold and what is not sold.” “But I do know that statistic will give me information to know how busy it will be.” “The issue of space is clearly beyond my control, and also the kitchen equipment.”

Environmental Pillar: Chef 1 has no control over food pre-preparation schedules, which contributes to waste. The owner often instructs him to cook more in advance to save time later, even if this leads to discarding food.

“So I have to throw it away, but only because the restaurant owner tells me, ‘Cook, cook, so that the next day you don’t have to leave so late.’” “If we had more storage, we could store more items to extend the shelf life of food for a couple of days.” “I cook for three days ahead for reasons of energy, time, and food waste.”

SECTION 5 – ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES (SDG 12: 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Hazardous waste, 12.5 Waste reduction)

Attitude (TPB)-Reduction of Food Waste (SDG 12.3): The Chef has a positive attitude towards waste reduction of the aliments. The chef is sensitive to sustainable food handling, and when it comes to waste, he always try to optimized the use of food. This contributes to SDG 12.3 – Food Waste Signalling a forward-thinking, resource-efficient mindset.

"I hate throwing food. It makes no sense to me. We use every part of the vegetable or meat.”

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) -Waste Separation (SDG 12.5): The chef perceives a lack of control over waste separation. He start to implement this practices in the kitchen, however they don't have the outside infrastructure (in the way of bin system) to support it. The difference between intention and impact caused by external constraints. This go against with the full realisation of SDG 12.5 – Waste Reduction.

"We try to separate things, but honestly, the bins out back are a mess. It's hard to know where it ends up."

Subjective Norms (TPB) - Hazardous Waste (SDG 12.4): The Chef based his behaviour on common sense and norms of human conduct, due to the lack of external pressure or regulation that encourage them to fancy-pants hazardous waste managing. This wake of institutional norms affect the realisation of SDG 12.4.

"I’ve never had anyone inspect or ask about oils or cleaning stuff. We just do what we think is safe."

SECTION 6 – SOCIAL PRACTICES (SDG 3: 3.4 Mental/physical health, 3.9 Exposure to hazards)

Attitude (TPB)- Mental/Physical Health (SDG 3.4) Chef 1 takes a resigned approach to the harsh realities of working in restaurants. “It’s just what the industry is” is also normalized overwork, which implies that there aren’t high expectations that this will improve mental or physical health. This has implications in the context of SDG 3.4 Mental/Physical Health, suggests policy failure in institutional support of work-life balance. The quality of life of workers seems compromised with little opportunity to take action.

"People are doing extra hours, double shifts… it is exhausting. That's just how the business is."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB)-Exposure to Hazards (SDG 3.9): Chef 1 have the intentionality for safety but control is “like bulls eye” controlled as it depends upon shopping, stock out, demand mismatch factors. This shows the limitations in adequately controlling hazards in peak periods. Connections to SDG 3.9 - Risk of Exposure to Hazard. Yet efforts to enforce safety and health internally are undermined by factors outside the organization (such as pace and work load).

"We try to keep things clean and safe, but with the rush, stuff happens. Burns, slips—it’s part of the job."

Subjective Norms (TPB) -Mental/Physical Health (SDG 3.4): There are unwritten rules in the Chef’s 1 team that everyone is tired and burned out. Peers perpetuate a mindset in which physical and mental distress is normalized and seldom questioned. Reinforces concerns under SDG 3.4. Social norms in the work organization may discourage discussions of health and stress, leaving sustained negative effects on employees well-being.

"We joke about it—like who’s more burned out. No one really complains because it’s just normal."

SECTION 7 – ECONOMIC PRACTICES (SDG 9: 9.2 Local industry, 9.4 Innovation/technology)

Attitude (TPB) -Support for Local Industry (SDG 9.2): Chef 1 attitude is good towards local sourcing with both factors of product quality (fresher) and community support (help the neighbour). This will contribute to SDG Goal 9.2 in relation to building local industry and promoting social cohesion through economic partnerships.

"We like to work with people from here. It’s fresher, and you help the neighbour."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) -Innovation and Equipment Use (SDG 9.4): The chef has limited access to high technology, so he has to be upgrade his capabilities of creativity and adaptability to take the control in his kitchen and performance in using the tools at hand. This is also related to SDG 9.4 which emphasizes creativity to improve production processes with significantly less dependence on high-tech approaches. It shows innovation through constraint.

"We don't have the latest machines, but we make the most of what we have. You have to be creative."

Subjective Norms (TPB) -Local Supplier Expectations (SDG 9.2): Chef 1 is shaped by social and community pressure to prioritize local sourcing, and this case illustrates how community pressure maintains local economic connections. It also provides evidence for the SDG 9.2, which draws attention to the social responsibility and interdependence of restaurants and local suppliers to foster inclusive industrial development.

"If we stop buying from the local farms, they go under. People expect us to support them."

SECTION 8 - FINAL REFLECTIONS

Advice to Other Chefs: Chef 1 says it boils down to just creating a healthy, diverse and equal work culture. Instead of providing kitchen hacks, he focuses on mental health and collaboration as the key to work longevity. He adds, "Everyone forgets about the mental health of cooks and managing conflicts in the kitchen but these are very important." The reflection falls in line with SDG 3.4 (Mental/physical health) by recognising the emotional atmosphere and peer support at work as a factor in staff well-being and retention over the long-term

"Ah, I know — and it's what keeps me working at the restaurant — it's the work environment. I have a lot of contact with friends who work in kitchens, and there are many conflicts… We act like a sort of mafia… I like it, and I think it should happen more in kitchens — focusing on the mental health of cooks… those kinds of things… the camaraderie that sometimes exists in my kitchen"

Additional Reflections on Sustainability Education: Chef 1 suggests adding education on food waste to culinary training. To illustrate, he uses the example of islanders on a remote Pacific Island who experience poverty amid food scarcity. He thinks this should be a fundamental aspect of the training of chefs (and part if we like, in active demonstration of environmental sustainability). Explicitly linked to this is SDG 12.3 (Food Waste) where new education systems are being called for "and as such play a direct role in tracking the REDUCE principle of waste at its source, through raising knowledge and awareness though formal education".

'"Ah, and I told you about this recently… I met a woman who worked managing food waste. I think it would be wonderful if they taught you about that, if it were part of your theoretical training. My friend went to Easter Island… they really do have that level of awareness about food waste… for me, it's essential now."

Case 2

The Chef that works in this kitchen mentioned his experience, but he seems to be a bit more conservative about his relationship with the kitchen. He have been working in a bakery before starting his current job in Ireland, in that bakery he has learn how to become a chef.

SECTION 2 – ATTITUDE (Personal Beliefs/Values)

Social Pillar: Chef 2 places importance on correct food handling to ensure customer safety. This includes following proper kitchen hygiene practices such as using the correct chopping boards for different types of food. He applies this pressure to himself to ensure high standards are maintained.

"I just follow the rules because they are perfect for the kitchen."
"Like using chopping boards — the right boards for specific foods."
"Actually, it's me. I put that pressure on myself."

Economic Pillar: Chef's main motivation to adopt sustainable practices is cost-saving. As head chef, he holds authority over his co-workers and insists on minimising food waste to keep expenses low.

"To save money, that's how we work. We have to save money."

Environmental Pillar: Chef 2 demonstrates awareness of the importance of saving energy and water in the kitchen, though he frames it more as a duty than a personal belief. He does not feel a personal obligation towards sustainability; but is rather just following the rules the authorities have laid down.

"Yeah, I don't like to waste food, I don't like it — the food or the water as well."
"It's very simple if you follow the rules."

SECTION 3 – SUBJECTIVE NORMS (Social Pressures/Influences)

Social Pillar: Chef enjoys knowledge transfer with his peers, noting that conversations with other chefs have helped him improve his kitchen management. For example, he implemented vacuum-sealing ("vacuo") storage after chatting about it with colleagues, which he believes contributes to protecting the health of the restaurant's customers.

"The vacuum plastic storage I mentioned — that was the main one — came from those conversations."

The chef also highlighted that his co-workers generally show little interest in sustainable practices such as recycling, reusing, or reducing leftovers. Part of his role, therefore, involves encouraging and directing the team to carry out tasks more efficiently and maintain proper hygiene.

"That's why I'm there as well — to keep them in line to do what needs to be done in the kitchen."
"It's about avoiding waste, keeping hygiene… it's not just cooking. That's also my role in the kitchen."

Economic Pillar: The chef is influenced by the owner to source beef from a local producer. This decision supports the local economy and exemplifies how the restaurant contributes to regional economic development.she
Environmental Pillar: No direct environmental practice was mentioned in this section; however, the chef's encouragement of waste reduction within the team indirectly supports environmental goals.

SECTION 4 – PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL (Ease or Difficulty of Action)

Social Pillar: Chef 2 noted difficulty in operation and kitchen layout, as it is difficult to make it efficient with the size of the kitchen. In theory, the extra room meant they were able to store more pre-prepared food and as a result save time and energy, and so focus on other tasks with increased quality and reduced stress.

"If I had control over this, I would change quite a few things. I would buy equipment that's easier to work with, and I would hire another person. I would change the menu and make it simpler to be more efficient. Space makes a difference — in my previous kitchen there was a lot of storage space, and that really made a difference. When you prepare in larger quantities, you have time to do other things with more care."

The fast pace during busy periods also impacts the team's ability to follow good practices, as they often have to prioritise serving customers over maintaining sustainable operations.

"Doing everything in a simple and quick way end up that we avoid the sustainable part, especially when it comes to the economy and avoiding waste."

Economic Pillar: Chef 2 desires to be part of decisions about purchases in new equipment and recruitment of staff. With whatever was leftover he would probably buy energy saving equipment or tools that require less electricity, helping to lower overhead costs and saving for the restaurant in the long run.

"If I had control over this, I would change quite a few things. I would buy equipment that's easier to work with, and I would hire another person."

Intermediate processing sometimes causes loss of food waste that damages the restaurant accounts due to unproductive when it is crowded.

Environmental Pillar: While the chef and his team are capable of implementing sustainable practices, such as better preparation and storage methods, these are often abandoned or ignored during busy service periods, that leads to unnecessary waste. This means that they are unable to adhere to the environmental responsibility aspect of their activity on a daily basis.

SECTION 5 – ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES (SDG 12: 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Hazardous waste, 12.5 Waste reduction)

Attitude (TPB**)**- **Food Waste Reduction (SDG 12.3):** The chef has an option oriented and action driven attitude towards food waste minimisation. That personal dedication to reuse speaks to a sustainable believe. It contributes to SDG 12.3 food waste, through conscious inventory and flexible menu. It's an expression of environmental concern and responsible consumption.

"We have a daily stock check, so we don't overorder and don't have to throw anything away. Anything that's close to going off, we try to use in a soup or a special."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB)-Waste Reduction (SDG 12.5): Although Chef 2 goes for waste separation, it is not clear where the waste would be taken. So, there is a partial feeling of control in the kitchen. This is a partial adoption of SDG 12.5

– Waste Reduction. They have efforts internally but may have no external systems, or transparency and hence the environmental footprint may not be maximized.

“We separate our waste – cardboard, plastic, food – but honestly, I don’t know where it ends up after it leaves the kitchen. That part is out of my hands.”

Subjective Norms (TPB) → Hazardous Waste (SDG 12.4): The restaurant owner’s environmental values also shape chef 2’s actions. This is a very good example of how subjective norms, influenced by leaders, can transform toward sustainability. This supports SDG 12.4 by using less toxic chemicals and facilitating safe waste disposal. It also demonstrates the role that leadership play in promoting environmental responsibility.

“Our cleaning products are all eco-certified. The owner is really into green stuff and pushed for it. We didn’t used to care much before that.”

SECTION 6 – SOCIAL PRACTICES (SDG 3: 3.4 Mental/physical health, 3.9 Exposure to hazards)

Attitude (TPB) -Exposure to Hazards (SDG 3.9): Chef 2 demonstrates a proactive approach to promoting a safer, cleaner kitchen space. The reason comes down to individual comfort and health. This supports SDG 3.9 but targeting at preventing exposure of materials harmful to health while in the kitchen. It's also in line with social sustainability by providing better working conditions.

"I try to keep my section clean and avoid heavy smells from frying. It helps me breathe and work better."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) - Mental Health (SDG 3.4): Chef 2 has insight into the emotional consequences of kitchen work and uses coping mechanisms previously learned from his experience in bakeries and big restaurant in his home country, this help to lead his team and behave a moderate perceived control of their mental health issues. These are good self-regulating approaches that complement SDG 3.4. The focus on team work and communication are socially sustainable practices that help develop resilience.

"Some days are very hard, especially with pressure. I breathe, go outside and talk to my team."

Subjective Norms (TPB) - Physical & Mental Support (SDG 3.4): Chef 2 is part of a culture in which mental and physical well-being is everyone’s responsibility. In his kitchen there are presence of strong team norms of mutual help exist. These emphasize a socially connected work place that corresponds with SDG 3.4. Social norms foster care and shared responsibility for long-term employee well-being.

"We all check on each other. If someone is not okay, we cover them or help. It's just normal here."

SECTION 7 – ECONOMIC PRACTICES (SDG 9: 9.2 Local industry, 9.4 Innovation/technology)

Attitude (TPB**) -Supporting Local Suppliers (SDG 9.2 – Local Industry**): Chef 2 has a positive attitude in sourcing from local suppliers, he perceives that this will provide quality advantage and supports the community economy. This area emphasises an additional motive to cooperate locally. Direct contribution to SDG 9.2 - Local Industry, Making value chains sustainable, economic development in regions.

"We try to use local meat and vegetables when possible. It's fresher and supports the area."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) -Technology Use and Innovation (SDG 9.4): The chef highlight a negative attitude due to low perceived behavioural control because of lack of access and exposure to technological advance. The cuisine professional functions within customary and conventional methodologies, refusing to use or obstructing the pressure of new technologies. Limited access to SDG 9.4 – Innovation/Technology imply lost opportunity to maximize resource use, reduce cost or minimize environmental impact.

"We're a bit old school here. We don't have fancy systems for waste or inventory. It's just what we know."

Subjective Norms (TPB) → Community Expectations (SDG 9.2): The chef acknowledges that customers are enlightened on food sources. This external social pressure promotes decisions that are consistent with local sourcing even when it's not explicitly codified in policy. Strengthens SDG 9.2 and emphasises social impact as a vehicle for sustainable economic choices, which meet consumer preferences and local identity.

"Customers sometimes ask where things come from. If it's Irish, they're happy."

SECTION 8 – Final Reflections

Attitude (TPB)-Value of Good Practices: Chef 2 feels a lack of power or authority when counselling others, expressing reluctance from the variance in kitchens. This would suggest that context and other situational factors have a strong influence upon behaviour, in agreement with the TPB— perceived behavioural control, is not only dependent on intention but also how easy or difficult it is perceived to perform. These are typical difficulties pertaining to the transfer of sustainable practices across differentiated social and organisational contexts as is hinted when addressing the social dimension of TBL (knowledge mobilization for hospitality in context).

"That's a bit more complicated, because I would need to know the needs of another kitchen in order for us to do that. So it's more complicated. This question is… it's even a bit strange, really."

Attitude (TPB) -Final Reflections on Practice: The short and polite closing indicates that no further strong feelings were held back. That the interviews do not provide further insight here could be taken as a sign of little engagement with broader

professional reflection, which might be an indication that there exist hierarchical limitations or lack of reflective culture. Lack of reflection may imply less participation or voice in strategic decision making which is related to the dimension of social equity and inclusion.

"No. Many Thanks."

Case 3

The Chef that works in this kitchen, Chef 3 has been working in kitchens for over 15 years and expressed a strong sense of belonging and passion for her profession, using the word “love” from her very first answer. In her recommendations, she emphasised that regardless of one’s background, loving the kitchen is key to working effectively.

SECTION 2 – ATTITUDE (Personal Beliefs/Values)

Social Pillar: She is free to introduce and implement new practices in the kitchen, provided they are helpful for the staff and focused on efficiency. She emphasizes the need for open communication amongst team members as vital to both ethical behaviour, preventing negative experiences at work and ensuring teamwork is coordinated.

“Yes, of course, I like creating, I like making things easier for the staff, making the food easier, making sure everyone is happy.”
“Yes, of course, I try to communicate daily. I try to ensure we all work in the same page. If we make mistakes, we try to communicate them and help each other so that make a better environment.”

Economic Pillar: Whit the promotion of efficient practices and ensuring that operations run as it should, the chef contributes to the kitchen’s productivity and cost-effectiveness. Her ability to fully control the kitchen allows her to implement practices that optimise resources and reduce unnecessary expenditure.
Environmental Pillar: Chef’s main sustainable activities focus on saving energy and avoiding food waste. Although her approach is rooted more in her love for the profession than in an explicit sustainability ideology, she ensures product quality for customers by training her team in good practices, such as proper storage of products in fridges. She believes that following good kitchen practices supports sustainability. Her expertise, shaped by her formal culinary training, ensures that everything is preserved and handled correctly.

“I have studied this as well, and I know how to do it correctly to ensure everything is well preserved.”

SECTION 3 – SUBJECTIVE NORMS (Social Pressures/Influences)

Social Pillar: Chef 3, no one influences her decisions in the kitchen. She emphasises that customer recognition is important and essential to her work, as she is deeply passionate about her profession. For her, appreciation from customers validates the care and love she puts into her cooking.

"*And when they say, 'Thank you, chef,' I say, 'No, thank you for enjoying the love I put into cooking.'"*

The chef also points out that she has full control over kitchen decisions. This is due to her direct boss having a problem with addiction, which leaves her as the sole person responsible for running the kitchen.

Economic Pillar: No direct references were made by the chef regarding economic influences on her practices in this section.

Environmental Pillar When it comes to ecological practices, the chef mentions that her co-workers show no interest in sustainability. Consequently, she cannot rely on them to influence or support the implementation of environmentally friendly measures in the kitchen.

"They don't care. They don't care about anything."

SECTION 4 – PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL (Ease or Difficulty of Action).

Social Pillar: Chef 3 finds it difficult to encourage her team to adopt efficient practices for food, energy, or water use, as they have not received any training. Although she is concerned about recycling, her team does not appear to support her efforts.

"No recycling."
"It's not difficult for me, but I would like it to happen."

Economic Pillar: Chef 3 does not have the authority to purchase new equipment, even though such upgrades could help her work more efficiently. The equipment she would choose would consume less electricity and contribute to energy savings for the restaurant.

Environmental Pillar: Chef's operational control is restricted by the restaurant's set menu. One of the main limitations to diversifying the menu and offering more varied dishes is the small size of the kitchen. This constraint affects her ability to introduce changes that might support more sustainable food preparation practices.

SECTION 5 – ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES (SDG 12: 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Hazardous waste, 12.5 Waste reduction)

Attitude (TPB)- Food Waste Reduction (SDG 12.3): Chef 3 demonstrates a very positive attitude towards reducing food waste, thanks to strong personal values and a pay-it-forward approach to creative reuse in the kitchen. This self-initiative is a sign of high intrinsic motivation. These actions also support Environmental Sustainability and are closely associated with SDG 12.3 – Food Waste, demonstrating efficient use of resources and waste reduction.

"I do not like to see good food go to waste. We reuse a lot, like bread becomes croutons, or veggie scraps for stock."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) → Waste Separation (SDG 12.5): Chef 3 is perhaps somewhat in charge of recycling, yet even it recognises that it doesn't have the space or the logistics. Although separation is performed, structural limitations prevent complete separation. This is partially the achievement of SDG 12.5 – Waste Reduction and actually highlights the yawning gulf between what is intended and what has become infrastructure. There is correct behaviour, but due to context it is limited.

"We separate most things — cardboard, cans, plastic — but space is tight and bins fill up quickly."

Subjective Norms (TPB)- Hazardous Waste (SDG 12.4): Chef 3 is influenced not by institution or regulation, but by informal norms and practices passed down from peers or experience, we have to remember that she has 15 years of experience working as a chef and she is the only want who has a proper formation as a chef. We can see that, when weakens social or regulatory norms are implemented, SDG 12.4 – Hazardous Waste management, only can relie in using traditional or own assumptions.

"Nobody talks about it really. We dispose of oil properly, but chemicals – I guess we follow what we were shown."

SECTION 6 – SOCIAL PRACTICES (SDG 3: 3.4 Mental/physical health, 3.9 Exposure to hazards)

Attitude (TPB)- Mental Health & Team Support (SDG 3.4): Chef 3 has a good attitude to wanting to talk openly about mental health. It sounds like the environment is comforting and not judgmental in promoting open speech and making feelings okay to express. That is consistent with SDG 3.4 (mental health and well-being). Allowing for emotional support also facilitates staff long-term well-being and social sustainability.

"If someone is feeling mentally off or low, we talk about it. No one hides it."

Subjective Norms (TPB) -Supportive Work Culture (SDG 3.4): For Chef 3, there is a great sense of community within the kitchen and everyone is there to help each other. A team culture that is supportive where you can take other people s struggles when they're under pressure. This behaviour fosters SDG 3.4 through mutual encouragement and assistance, imaging socially sustainable behaviour emanating from team norms and collaborative accountability.

"We support each other when work gets overwhelming. Everyone helps each other."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) - Hazard Management (SDG 3.9): Chef 3 knows that they are able and prepared to keep everyone safe and hazard-free. There's the ventilation of course, and the use of non-toxic cleaning supplies (across the nation chefs are frantically sourcing these things in order to feel some semblance of control over exposure). This corresponds to SDG 3.9 - Minimize exposure to dangerous chemicals and contamination. The safe equipment and safe materials are beneficial for both workers' health (social)and environmental quality (environmental).

“We use eco-friendly cleaning products now, and the extractor fans are top-notch, so air stays clean.”

SECTION 7 – ECONOMIC PRACTICES (SDG 9: 9.2 Local industry, 9.4 Innovation/technology)

Attitude (TPB) -Use of Technology/Innovation (SDG 9.4): Chef 3 has a favourable disposition towards the uptake of new age kitchen technology. Their preferences to purchase items like vacuum sealers reflects their priority of optimizing efficiency and minimizing resource waste. Adoption of technology supports the cost savings for operations and lowering spoilage is evidence of SDG 9.4 (upgrade for sustainability); indirectly contributing for environmental sustainability in reduction in waste.

"We’re testing this new vacuum sealer that keeps ingredients fresh longer and saves space."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) → Support for Local Suppliers (SDG 9.2): Chef 3 accepts that it will be more difficult sourcing everything locally, but also assumes it is worth the extra effort. This is moderate perceived control — he sees the problems, but he still chooses local partnerships. This serves SDG 9.2 which is to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by extension, the use of local sourcing. It also helps build communities, which is good for the health of society.

"We try to work with small local suppliers. It’s sometimes more work, but you get better quality."

Subjective Norms (TPB) - Collaboration and Economic Sustainability (SDG 9.2/9.4): The influences of peers, to whom Chef 3 listens, especially from the younger generation staff, is that of considering technology advancements. This is the power of internal subjective norms in promoting economic innovation. It fosters knowledge capitalisation and offers for ongoing enhancement, as enshrined in SDG 9.4. It is also a revealing sign of the tide turning to meet the times.

"Some of our tech changes were actually suggested by younger staff—they’re more into digital stuff."

SECTION 8 – Final Reflections

Attitude (TPB)- Advice to Other Chefs: Chef 3 supports the philosophy of the behavioural control. Their urging to "small start" points to a practical way of thinking that acknowledges that for many people, sustainability does not have to be a dramatic departure from their current living conditions to begin. As such, the attention on overage reuse proves a dedication to thriftiness. Utilization of ingredients to minimise food waste (from both an environmental and economic standpoint) is an option under SDG 12.3 (Food waste reduction).

"Start small, like saving the oil or using the leftovers for lunch staff meals. It’s not that hard."

Perceived Behavioural Control (TPB) – Achievability: Chef 3 admits it's tough to go all-out green, but that slow change can make a difference. That believe in self-efficacy by individuals in conditions of constraint. The partial progress recognition is making an issue-aware gesture based on the goal of long-term sustainability to reduce its burden. This view is consistent with the three factors of the Triple Bottom Line; for it demonstrates a trade-off of environmental aspiration, social realism, and economic constraint.

"Sometimes we think it's impossible to do everything green, but even if you manage one thing, it helps."

Analysis:

According with the theory, sustainable behaviour must be manifested when the individuals have the intentions of perform a sustainable practices, this intentions will be influenced by attitude, subjective norm and perceived control.

Behavioural beliefs: For Dublin's kitchen line managers, attitudes are mostly formed by their behavioural beliefs. They belief that saving food or energy is beneficial for the operation effectiveness, economic savings and customer satisfaction. Despite this, these environmental benefits are usually influenced by business performance, signalling favourable perceptions in aligning sustainability and hygiene with commercial dynamics.

Normative beliefs: These are the source of subjective norms. In each case of study the normative believes where influenced by restaurant owners and their need to maintain profit margins or keep customers satisfied (regarding choice of product, speed & freshness) and professional advices given by chefs in other kitchens. Although owners are pushing certain behaviours to save costs, peer pressure drives innovation much more.

Control beliefs: The degree to which these chefs believe they have the resources and authority to behave sustainable is perceived behavioural control. Although they operate free from corporate guidelines controlling food sourcing, menu planning and daily kitchen operations, their ability to fully integrate sustainable policies into their kitchen practices is hampered by the structural constraints of an ad-hoc meal program: limited storage space, old equipment and untrained staff. These barriers often define whether or not intentions can become actions.

Chapter 5 Discussion:

This study focused on investigating sustainable practices in each unit of analysis (restaurant kitchens in Dublin), among head chefs with the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), triple bottom line (TBL) and UN-Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopting an inductive, interpretivist, qualitative research design based on 3 Cases of study, where in-depth interviews were conducted, revealing the personal attitude, perceived social norm and behaviour control that underlie sustainable practices when no formal regulations are available or required. Our interpretation of these findings is considered with respect to the literature, practical implications, and conceptual frameworks.

1.- Attitudes Matter: Interpersonal Beliefs and Long Term Motivation

Sustainability attitudes had been noticed as an essential motivator of pro-environmental behaviour among the head chefs that took part. Attitudes, adapted from the TPB (Ajzen in Etheridge *et al*.,2023; Meng *et al*. 2022), are the individual's own personal feelings about whether or not the behaviour is a good thing to do and were evident through chef emotions and morals concerning food waste, energy use, and employee health in this study.

For example Chef 1 being a resourceful individual, practising ways of cooking to reduce stress and wastage on food — demonstrating personal sustainability. Statement — “We use every part of the vegetable or meat”: This directly aligns with TPB point, strong positive attitude reinforce intention. For the Chef 3, the love to the kitchen goes together with professional proud to be a chef and that was behind the deeply rooted intrinsic sustainability motivation. As confirmed by earlier studies (Bui & Filimonau, 2021), it is elements of values and emotional attachment to work, that underpin sustainable change in hotel organisations.

Compare these to Chef 2 — Sustainability was seen by him as a duty more than an active belief and one governed predominantly by the law. His attitude was slightly less positive where he had separate waste and hygiene practices. The chef seemed to be at a weaker stage of behavioural intention, as it is mentioned by Meng *et al*., (2022) that sustainable behaviours grounded in external motivations may lack consistency or innovation.

So these differences across participants provide support for the basic TPB proposition that attitudes strongly influence behavioural intentions – this is especially so in the case of voluntary rather than institutionally enforced practices. This finding thus empowers the notion of Toshima and Bokhoree (2024) that environmental attitude moderated by environmental commitment/consciousness are important in the hospitality industry.

2. Subjective Norms-Peers, Leadership, Customers

Subjective norms represent perceived social pressure to engage in or not engage with a particular behaviour (Ajzen, in Etheridge *et al.,*20203). In the high-pressure

environment of Dublin's restaurant kitchens, these norms emerged as a product of managerial authority, peer pressure and customer demands.

Chef 1: They also stated that what mainly limits or enforces sustainable actions is the financial loyalty to the owner and that they were forced to compromise their resource savings with operational efficiency due to pressure from the owner. He even admitted to be operating under the yoke of creativity-squelching imperatives — such as make more via cook more and save time that is equivalent to save salary (an recipe for spoiled food). Indeed, that duality is according to the mixed influence of subjective norms in a context where there are no sustainability policies officially available (Karatepe *et al*.,2022).

What was fascinating is that all chefs mentioned their networks of other chefs as a kind of unregulated source: they seek inspiration from them, and measure themselves against them. Consistent improvements to storage, prep work and reuse strategies were things that they learned from other chefs. This confirms Silva *et al*. (2025) found peer influence critical to the spread of green skills in an Hospitality sector.

As well as customers, they appeared to be an almost in-obvious -yet — consistent playing influencer. Chef 3 wanted to keep food quality and freshness at a high level for customer satisfaction. A similar sign was seen by chef 2 that lead to start using local product on a larger scale, because of chefs positive feeling towards fair procurement (SDG 9.2). As shown in the examples, market demands and awareness of consumers can be considered as institutional pressures (Lewicka & Starowicz-Rajca, 2023) — indirect but potentially very powerful.

This reaches a head in the finding that subjective norms are not uniform. They can either enable or inhibit sustainability, according to the actor (owner, peer, customer). This supports Meng *et al*., (2022) and Vavrova *et al.,* (2024) suggest that the sustainability norms in hospitality require a higher degree of institutionalisation, otherwise its implementation will continue to be patchy and character-driven.

3.-Perceived Behavioural Control: The Essence, and Shortcomings, of Autonomy

The last pillar of the TPB, perceived behavioural control; this pertains to an individual's sense of how easy or hard performing the behaviour will be (Ajzen, cited in Etheridge *et al*.,2023). This dimension was the most prevalent across all three cases, as it offers indications of where intentions do not fully convert into actions.

All of the chefs experienced certain real-world restrictions- not enough space, old equipment, fixed menus, no staff. But even when the will to be pro-environmental was arguably evident in many of these actions—recycling, food repurposing and perhaps mental health support—they were largely weakened by a set of external constraints. Consistent with Moosa and He (2023) where they also suggest if sustainable practices are not with the proper infrastructure and resource management, it would disappear.

During his interview, chef 2 mentioned that "while we (his team) separate our waste… but I don't know where it ends up", this highlighting again the paradox of partial control: as individuals may perform sustainable actions internally, congested external systems (e.g., waste management services) may not provide either financially or

infrastructurally towards the full realisation of those behaviours. Chef 3 also expressed some concern that her team was not trained well, leading to a lack of sustainable practices being put in place, even though she may be willing to lead.

This data confirm what Meng *et al*., (2022) and Silva *et al.,* (2025) demonstrated to be sustainable, likely due also to the relative lack of perceived control--which is determined by knowledge, resources and support from institutions among others—needed for an intention to translate into real impact. This highlights that it is not enough to focus on changing the individual, but also the entire system in which behaviour takes place.

4.- The Triple Bottom Line and the SDGs

The study is framed using a Triple Bottom Line (TBL), sustainability involves no just ecological responsibility, but rather, it represents an evaluation of and perhaps even a trade-off between environmental, social, and economic performance (Shim *et al*.,2021).

The chefs were introduced to practices of ecological sustainability linked primarily with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), such as food waste reduction (12.3), waste separation (12.5), and the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products (12.4). The majority of chefs were aware and tried but they were constrained by systemic deficiencies (such as inadequate bin infrastructure, equipment or lack of formal training), which hindered the ability to enact change successfully. As Bui and Filimonau (2021) pointed out in connection to this exact issue: the intention is there but actual infrastructure typically is not.

Concerns for social sustainability related to SDG 3 (Health and Well-being) included mental health, team support and hazard reduction. Importantly, Chef 3 delivered an emotionally safe kitchen, thereby matching her behaviour with SDG 3.4. Chef 1 laughed and said all that overwork was “just what the industry is,” revealing a culture with embedded burnout. This dissociation is in concordance with the results of Karatepe and colleagues Which is emphasised by Sahibrao (2022) on having green leadership within the worksite would influence the well-being of staff.

Finally, economic sustainability, which is SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure), exposes even more opportunities and limitations. The former include chefs advocating for local sourcing , as it influences product quality, sustainability, and the resilience of communities. The latter is the inability to innovate due to insufficient funding and actual decision-making capabilities. For instance, even if chefs wanted an energy-efficient stove and viable kitchen lights, the choice was often not theirs. According to Singh and Dutt, high costs and low returns in many areas of hospitality, including community sustainability, make investment impractical. Consequently, while the chefs were often able to address single elements and structures of sustainability, achieving holistic, integrated TBL performance was frequently beyond their reach. Institutions, as well as the organizations in which they worked, were significant barriers to overcome.

5. Practical Implications for the Irish Hospitality Sector

Ireland's hospitality sector remains a critical source of income for the nation, contributing over 12% of Gross Value Added and employing thousands in all parts of the country. However, as this investigation has shown, sustainable activities in the restaurant subsector are almost available just if the chef wants to. Regardless, Ireland is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and has made strides in its sustainable progress through SDGs . However, since there is no sufficient enforcement of sustainable kitchen activities when it comes to food service, an opportunity is wasted.

For these activities to occur more frequently, the strategies will be as follows:

-Integrated sustainability education with culinary training (Chef 1, Bui & Filimonau (2021).
-Infrastructure for waste management as per GSTC (2023) recommendations
-Promoting owner–chef partnerships in the selection of products and equipment to enhance perceived behavioural control.
-Internal sustainability audits with corresponding performance indicators specialized to small restaurants.
-In the long term, creating a culture of mental health equality and more inclusive leadership will develop the social side of sustainability — greatly helping with talent retention and boosting employee performance.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Based in Dublin, this study aimed to interrogate how sustainability was conceptualised and engaged with by head chefs operating on the daily—levels of kitchen rhythm. This research has utilised the Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB), Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reveal the nuances and context-specific realities of sustainable behaviour in a relatively under-researched sector within tourism, hospitality. Doing so builds new knowledge and expands further our understanding of existing theory.

Theory of planned behaviour fits in the understanding of sustainable behaviour in each unit of analysis, when they are not required to follow mandatory sustainability practices. The perceived behavioural control shape the majority of the sustainable practices, it means that if they have the control over specific sustainable actions, they are going to adopt a sustainable behaviour.

Social Practices results showed a range of perceived behavioural control, some chefs were able to shape the way they work and integrate training with their everyday responsibilities, while others found it more challenging because of the from management decisions, lack of space and resources, which made sustaining health-promoting and socially supportive practices more difficult.

Economic Practices chefs are often able to undertake low cost/day-to-day decision-making processes which directly save money, but may lack the power to invest in more expensive energy-efficient equipment or increased staffing which could drive improvements in operational efficiency and long-term financial sustainability.

Pro-Environmental Practices in this part of the puzzle perceived behavioural control is low, chefs are often constrained by kitchen size, storage capacity and a fixed menu. Recycling infrastructure outside the building is either unavailable or not designed to deal with food waste specifically (SDG 12.5). When service is busy, it is easy to cut corners in sustainability and focus on speed and meeting demand.

Theoretical Contributions and Personal Reflection.

Theoretically, this study confirms the importance of TPB as an essential framework for understanding sustainability behaviours in hospitality in places where no formal environmental, economic and social policies have been established. The study extends the application context of TPB into real operational settings by targeting line managers in restaurant kitchens, as opposed to senior management from hoteliers. The theory remained robust in accordance with the model as attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control were evident and there was an overall influence. However, the study also illustrated a weakness of TPB in that intention does not automatically translate into action when there are institutional, infrastructural or resource barriers.

Even for me personally, the effects of this research was life-changing. I initially thought about sustainability fundamentally as a structural, or policy issue. But then after hearing the voices of chefs and understanding their daily limitations, I learned that

personal commitment and grassroots leadership hold an incredibly important place in this equation as well. Empowering operational-level staff will generate genuine whatever the sector in weak or non-existing enforcement sectors it should encourage more real and bottom-up sustainability them, practices.

Data Limitations and Missed Opportunities

Like all research, there were limitations to the project. Strengths of this study included the qualitative, case of study with in-depth interviews; in retrospect, the sample could have been expanded to include sub-chefs, kitchen porters or even restaurant owners. Moreover, the study only examined sustainability in urban restaurants in Dublin — further examination of rural contexts or other cities may highlight regional differences in terms of how sustainability is addressed.

Evaluation of Research Instrument

Case study with deep interviews were appropriate for the interpretivist, inductive approach of this study. This was an open and free format which brought out some unexpected themes like the mental health of staff members, morale within the team and emotional attachment to kitchen were shortlisted. Also, language things could have played a role. The interviews were all held in the chefs' native languages (Portuguese and Spanish), but as we know, there are always nuances in the translation.

Recommendations for Future Research

A larger set of the sample: It should include workers from concluded roles in kitchen hierarchy, restaurant owners or rural staff members to understand it completely. Context diversification; this kind of study could be conducted in other hospitality sectors (cafés, hotel breakfast services, catering companies) to determine how valuable are these findings.

Surprising Findings and Their Implications

The level of personal responsibility and emotional investment that chefs showed for sustainability was one of the most important insights from the research, particularly around food waste and mental health. Also it was not surprising how deeply the source of locally and support of neighbour (SDG 9.2) had an impact on economies even more so out of pride or identity than obligation. That opens up a rich vantage point for further study at the confluence of sustainability, their own localities and the way they are professionals.

Implications and Recommendations for Industry.

The results of this study have a number of implications for multiple stakeholders: Bottom-up engagement with sustainability can spark real behavioural change among employed hospitality professionals, which managers and owners of restaurants can benefit from. Fostering a greater sense of ownership and responsibility among the workforce by allowing chefs to make their own decisions as well as supporting them

with training, could enhance sustainable performance while keeping staff on your books.

In conclusion, this study was exploratory in nature and provided insight on how sustainability is translated into everyday kitchen practices. It also leads to obvious lines of work for further research and useful intervention. Above all, it re-emphasizes the belief that sustainability in hospitality is not only a topic of systems and structures but also one about people, beliefs, limitations, and being able to lead from within.

Glossary:

TPB (Theory of Planned Behaviour) – A psychological theory created by Icek Ajzen in order to explain human behaviour using three determinants: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

TBL (Triple Bottom Line) – The sustainability framework that incorporates three interconnected pillars: social, economic, and environmental performance.

SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) – A set of 17 world-wide goals designed by the United Nations to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" addressing issues like poverty, health, education, the environment.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being – The UN goal for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages.

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure – The UN goal to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production – The UN goal to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, including waste reduction and efficient use of natural resources.

Line Manager (Kitchen Context) – Head chef or kitchen supervisor in a restaurants kitchen who is responsible for operations, staff and food preparation.

Sustainable Practices (Kitchen Context) – These are actions that can be conducted in the kitchen to reduce environmental damage, strengthen local economy and achieve societal well-being for example reduce food wastage, conserve energy or source sustainably.

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) – In TPB, the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question.

Subjective Norms – Perceived social pressure to do or not to do a behaviour, in TPB influenced by the expectations of key people.

Attitudes – A factor on models such as TPB focused on the extent to which a person holds favourable or unfavourable appraisals of the behaviour concerned.

Food Waste (SDG 12.3) – The food that is either discarded or lost during production/supply chain/roentgen tube and preparing((or for restaurants), wasted.).

Hazardous Waste (SDG 12.4) – Waste that poses substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment, such as cooking oils, cleaning chemicals, and other kitchen-related hazardous materials.

Waste Reduction (SDG 12.5) – Actions to reduce the volume of waste produced while promoting recycling and reusing, along with improving kitchen resource efficiency.

Local Sourcing – Procuring ingredients and supplies from local produce reduces the transportation costs thus, allowing for economic benefits to the producers in that sector.

Sustainability Education (Culinary Context) – Training and knowledge transfer focused on sustainability education in culinary context to increase the awareness towards environmental impact, sustainable resource use and waste reduction in culinary education and practice.

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Appendix A 1 Interview Guide

SECTION 1 – Introduction
How long have you been working in this restaurant as head chef?
What responsibilities do you have in your current role?
Have you worked in other restaurants before this one?
SECTION 2 – ATTITUDE (Personal Beliefs/Values)
How do you feel personally about practices that help reduce waste or make the kitchen more efficient?
Are there habits or methods in your kitchen that you feel proud of having implemented or followed? Why?
Can you share any changes you've made over time in how you manage food, energy, or materials at work? What motivated those changes?
What encourages you to take specific actions to improve kitchen practices, even when it's not strictly required?
SECTION 3 – SUBJECTIVE NORMS (Social Pressures/Influences)
Do you feel your team, supervisors, or guests expect certain actions from you regarding waste, energy, or food handling?
Can you describe a moment when others around you influenced how you handled water, food, or energy in the kitchen?
Are there certain things you do differently because of pressure or encouragement from external groups (e.g., management, inspectors, suppliers)?
How do you think your colleagues view kitchen practices like recycling, reusing, or reducing leftovers?
Do you talk with other chefs about how things should be done? How much do others' views matter to you?"
SECTION 4 – PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL (Ease or Difficulty of Action)
What makes it easier or harder for you to follow low-waste or efficient kitchen practices?
Do you feel you have the right training, tools, or time to follow efficient practices with food, energy, or water?
If you had full control over how things were run in the kitchen, what would you change or improve?
Are there any specific rules or routines that help or limit your ability to carry out these practices?
Have you ever wanted to improve something but felt it was out of your control? Can you give an example?
SECTION 5 – ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES (SDG 12: 12.3 Food waste, 12.4 Hazardous waste, 12.5 Waste reduction)
Have you received any training about how to reduce food waste or manage materials in the kitchen?
What usually happens with leftover or unused food at your restaurant?
Is there a process for dealing with kitchen materials like cleaning liquids, packaging, or oils?
Do you try to avoid certain products because they're hard to dispose of or create extra waste?
Are recyclable materials separated (glass, plastic, etc.) in your kitchen?
SECTION 6 – SOCIAL PRACTICES (SDG 3: 3.4 Mental/physical health, 3.9 Exposure to hazards)

What steps do you or your team take to ensure a safe and healthy working environment?
Are there any measures in place to reduce smoke, strong chemicals, or noise during work?
How does your team support one another during stressful or high-pressure times?
Have you ever felt that your physical or mental health is affected by work conditions in the kitchen?
Do you participated in the creation of the menu of the restaurant? What do you consider?
How does your team ensure the food quality for the customers?
SECTION 7 – ECONOMIC PRACTICES (SDG 9: 9.2 Local industry, 9.4 Innovation/technology)
Has your restaurant introduced new equipment or technology to improve how the kitchen runs?
Do you prefer working with local suppliers or those who follow specific production standards? Why?
Has your kitchen partnered with other companies or groups to improve processes or share ideas?
Do you think changes in kitchen practices can lead to saving money or improving long-term operations?
Are you consider in the selection of your team in the kitchen?
SECTION 8 – Final Reflections
What advice would you give to chefs in other restaurants who want to improve their kitchen practices?
Is there anything else you'd like to share that you think is important but hasn't come up yet?