**The consequence of waiters' professional identity on passion for work and its effects on employee turnover: a qualitative approach**.

**Abstract**

**Purpose**- This study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between waiters' professional identity and its antecedents such as: extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma. "Salience" will be used as a moderator of this relationship, in order to explain the prominence of the stimuli. The consequences of professional identity on passion and turnover intention will be analysed.

**Design/methodology/approach-** This study employed a qualitative methodology, which encompassed 3 focus group discussions (18 participants) and 11 in-depth interviews, (total 29 people). Participants will be based on Michelin starred restaurants in London. Founded on analysis of the qualitative data, the antecedents and consequences of professional identity were formulated.

**Findings-** Findings demonstrate that the main factors of the formation of waiters' professional identity are: extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma, its consequences (passion and turnover intention), and salience as a moderator of this relationship to clarify the relevance of the stimuli. These factors have been demonstrated to have an effect on the formation of professional identity.

**Practical implications**- This study is of significance in encouraging additional explorations for scholars and restaurateurs about the function of work in identity formation in connecting to waiters, and offers more practical resolutions for restaurateurs to develop passion for work and reduce turnover intention among the staff.

**Originality/value-** This study is relevant because the repercussion of perceptions, such as identity and identification for emerging exclusive job roles, is still under-examined in certain conditions. Restaurateurs need to work with and comprehend the quality of the individual framework of waiters in job roles because these have a stimulus on the fundamental interests, such as passion for work and turnover of the waiting workforce. Moreover, within the hospitality industry, there has been a predisposition to focus more on chefs than waiting staff.

# 1.    Introduction

Restaurants employ a high number of employees across the UK, accounting for 4.5% of the total UK employment, but this figure masks the high degree of employee turnover (UKHospitality, 2019). In the aim for continued achievement in a marketplace categorised by proliferation of the product and employee dissatisfaction, more and more organisations are endeavouring to develop meaningful, deep and long-term relationships with their employees (Tanwar and Prasad, 2016). There are only some companies like Marriot Hotels and Pizza Hut, who have understood the advantages that a solid organisation-employee relationship can engender, not only in retaining staff, but also in publicising the company to others (Born and Kang, 2015).

To date, researchers (Petrovic and Markovic, 2012; Sehkaran and Sevcikova, 2011; Sukhu et al., 2017) have largely concentrated on the purely operational aspects of chefs' and waiters' jobs, for example, staff performance or training. Little attention has been paid to waiters' sense of self or their professional identity(ies). Shigihara (2014) suggests that the clear majority of ethnographical studies (Erickson, 2009; Gatta, 2002; Paules, 1991) have focused on the occupational aspects of restaurant workers' culture, and, furthermore, have tended to focus on the food (and drink) service employees at large, as opposed to waiting. Consequently, this study emphasises the importance of this opportunity to continue research in order to offer a concrete understanding of this relationship. Due to the relevant studies (Gonzalez et al., 2018; Loy, 2017; Wong and Fisher, 2015) on professional identity and based on the evidence demonstrated above, further research about this topic is worthwhile to enrich existing studies. Restaurant waiters' professional identity is of fundamental importance in the way that waiters recognise themselves, and, therefore, links to issues of satisfaction, passion for work and turnover intention. The main objectives are to address these gaps by exploring what aspects influence professional identity and what are the main consequences.

In particular, this research contributes to existing waiters' professional identity knowledge, by offering understanding to restaurateurs and academics, as one of the first empirical qualitative studies to investigate the different aspects (extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma), and how this relationship with professional identity influences passion for work and turnover intention, in a more holistic

approach (Alshathry et al., 2017; Benet-Martinez and Hong, 2014; Loy, 2017). "Salience" as a moderator of this relationship is used to explain the prominence of the stimuli.

This paper begins with a broad discussion of professional identity and extends the theoretical framework obtained from the literature, which suggests the main professional identity antecedents and consequences of such relationships in the workplace. Then, the research methodology approach is considered and designed, followed by an explanation of the research findings and theoretical implications of professional identity and their consequences for managers who desire to reduce high staff turnover, finishing with the conclusions and limitations of this study.

## 2.    Literature review

Professional identity can be understood to involve an 'essence', which is considerably moulded by organisational and social contexts. Aspiring identity claims a significant perception from a previous group of organisational academics (Muzio et al. 2020; Rodrigues and Mogarro, 2019; Saks and Adams, 2019) who employed the notion of 'organisational essence' to define the ideal values, policies, or behaviour of organisations. These components can become part of the essence of employees' identity, even before they belong to the organisation and thus it is a provisional part of their professional identity. As a result, in this literature review the terms 'identity' and 'professional identity', and how these related themes intersect with the restaurant organisations in particular, the role of waiting employees is explored (Appendix 1). Thus, in addition to exploring relevant fields of scholarly literature, this section will analyse different approaches to these terms.

**Professional identity**

The main focal construct of this study is professional identity, which according to Rodrigues and Mogarro (2019) is a set of attitudes, understandings and beliefs about people's roles within the context of work (Lingard et al., 2002; Rodrigues and Mogarro, 2019). Hickson and Thomas (1969) created a hierarchy of work sectors, ranging from more professional occupations, such as doctors and architects to less professional occupations (e.g. nurses) (Saks and Adams, 2019). Hickson and Thomas (1969) established a list of 19 components that characterise the degree to which an occupation is professionalised. In almost every component (e.g. skills based on competence testing, theoretical knowledge, code of conduct and/or ethics, specialised education, occupational title change) waiters rank low (Muzio et al.

2020). However, there are many interpretations of the concept of professionalism and what it means to be a 'professional' (Johnson et al., 2006). How an occupation is described varies according to who has the power to interpret and prescribe a specific occupation, so it is significant to contemplate the control of professionals when discussing identity formation.

Studies (Johnson et al., 2006; Liecht and Fennel, 2001; Okada, 2019) recommend that modifications in work institutions (not only in the hospitality sector) have led to a change in what professional work implies and represents (Johnson et al., 2006). For example, professionals have been defined in several ways, ranging from being social agents to being specialists (Muzio et al. 2020), from professional to management (Liecht and Fennel, 2001), and from professional business to business professional (Suddaby et al., 2007). Parding et al. (2012) argue that the professional's career trajectory bifurcates into a practitioner or into a specialist. Being a practitioner decreases the employee's status and being an expert improves the employee's status. In light of these findings, institutions should realise that professionals normally maintain a solid identification with occupation-specific principles and, for an adjustment to be applied successfully, negotiations between institutions and occupations are required, both at the level of institutional values as well as the level of principles.

In this way, the negotiation can be steered away from the institution's tendency to believe it is being victimised by the constraints of the occupations, a tactic that is normally unproductive for the customer, institution and the professional as well as following extensive training programmes. Several other academics (Noordegraaf et al., 2014) also maintain that professionals may gain from winning new ideas and beliefs, even when management creates them. Within institutions and within occupations themselves staff constantly struggle in their attempts to shape professional identity. In the case of a waiting job, this competing for control over identity formation can be understood as resulting from the conflict of three levels of professional activity: that of the national or global company, the localised institution, and waiters' activities, including how they interact with customers. All three of these competing levels affect the way waiting staff create their identities, even though they imply different and opposing values, logics, expectations, and demands.

However, people working in all types of sectors are under the same pressure to meet challenges to their professional identity. These challenges can be experimented with from the beginning until the end of their career (Ibarra, 1999; Dellaportas et al., 2019). Individuals

from supposed low-status occupations, such as waiters, chefs and maids (Ehrenreich, 2001), medium-status occupations, such as human resources professionals, social workers and nurses (Renga et al., 2020), and high-status occupations such as doctors, lawyers and executives, who have a good work reputation (Khurana, 2002), are all in the process of dynamically shaping their identities.

The process of forming identity is a difficult task for professionals in organisations for two different reasons. Firstly when professionals are more identified with an occupation than with their work institution, this creates conflicts between the institution's staff expectations and the staff themselves. Secondly, when professionals are more focused on their occupation than their work institution, this often leads to higher employee turnover and indifferent institutional behaviours. Therefore, the current study seeks to analyse the occupational identification from various perspectives to determine how they affect institutions' performance (Koenig, 2017).

When the individual identifies with the institution, they tend to be more cooperative, put in more effort and exhibit good/functional organisational behaviour (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Christensen, 2018). Knippenberg and Schie (2000) state that some people are more identified with their work sector than with their organisation. Additionally, individuals can work in an organisation where its missions are linked to their professional goals or it can be that a company's mission is different from staff's professional goals (Valeau and Paille, 2019). In the first type of institution, "the majority of the members are professionals, the professional content of the work is central to the mission of the organisation, and the goals of the organisation are largely consistent with those of the professionals it employs" (Wallace, 1995, p.229). Typical cases of such professions include law firms, medical clinics, research institutes and accounting firms. In contrast, the second type of institution includes those in which the profession normally characterises a minority of the workers, the professional aims of the work are not those of the company, and the targets of the company and the occupation are not essentially consistent: examples of such institutions include governmental agencies.

In the first of Wallace's (1995) two types of institutions (in this case, the restaurant organisation), waiters' mission is to give a good service and be efficient. For waiters in the second type of organisation (in this case more general hospitality companies, which do not solely employ waiters, e.g. state-owned companies such as People 1st, private companies

such as BigHospitality, or academic institutions), the missions are not always clear. Non-waiters in these institutions monitor and develop strategies and report on the quality of restaurant services (e.g. problems around retaining staff in the sector and how this is influencing skill shortage gaps and skill gaps) and the protection of waiters' jobs. They further address issues connected to waiters, perform management research, train, or do other jobs separate from the different tasks of waiting practice.

To bring the various facets of this discussion together, since there is often a rift between occupation and institution in the hospitality industry, waiters working for a particular institution are often required to meet the goals of their particular institution and not necessarily the wider goals of their occupation. In the following section, the concepts of profession, professionalism, professional and professionalisation will be discussed in order to clarify the difference between them.

**Profession, professionalism, professional or professionalisation**

The twentieth century has been characterised by the significant development of professions; in current terminology, the concept of profession means the most varied professional occupations (Sundin and Hedman, 2005). However, in the sociological field the concept of 'profession' has been characterised by its polysemy. Academics (Abbott, 2014; Johnson et al., 2006; Sundin and Hedman, 2005) have proliferated a variety of approaches, which shows the challenge of defining the concept of professions.

Bearing this in mind, firstly one needs to identify the specific features of professions, when an activity is considered a profession, and the characteristics that distinguish professional occupations from non-professional occupations. Secondly, the study discussion of professions during the twentieth century will be analysed. The following section will discuss the issue of professionalism. Here the ideas are focused on the importance of professionalism within professions and how important this is for understanding professional identities. Lastly, the difference between professions and work will be analysed and contextualised in the occupation of waiting.

**Profession and work -** Several authors (e.g. Abadi et al., 2020) acknowledge the concept of professions, which was formerly identified as work; this term has arisen with the emergence of industrial society and the division of labour. One of the main characteristics of the

twentieth century was the development of professions (Evetts, 2012). Progress in different fields of knowledge and the increasing complexity of society helped its proliferation; the increasing advancement in the service sector versus the industrial sector led to a society of professions. Selander (1990) explains that the logic of profession has not always existed, but is rather a phenomenon of the development of the capitalist state.

Thus, the emphasis is now on specialised education, qualifications and meritocracy. From this the 'ideal type' emerges: the expert or professional. Academic qualifications credit their holders with honour, prestige, lifestyle and certain virtues of a prominent social and professional status, even more than the technical and cognitive skills acquired from working in a profession. Therefore, the phenomenon of the professionalisation of society means that credentials (diplomas), as opposed to experience, become the endorsement of advantageous professional status. Palazor and Tovar (2004) established three different occupation categories: an elite professional minority that no-one disputes, a large occupational group that seeks professional status and achieves it in certain circumstances, and the clear majority of routine manual or non-manual occupations. What then would be the traits that define different professions and occupations or jobs? Some authors' definitions have been considered as follows:

Friedman (2019) states that the profession is defined to specifically historical procedures that create underlying relations between comparatively desirable high intensities of proper ensuing rewards, position and education in the social sector of work. To Brante (2011), professions are not manual but are rather full-time occupations, which presuppose longstanding expertise and tend also to a school education that provides a specific professional theoretical knowledge often demonstrated by examinations. For Sokoll (2019) profession means a full-time, non-manual occupation whose exercise supposes an academic, specialised, systematic training. Entrance varies depending on passing specific tests that provide diplomas denoting a professional role within the division of labour (Palazor and Tovar, 2004).

Previous studies (Brante, 2011; Palazor and Tovar, 2004) proposed two basic approaches that characterise where the definition of profession can be found: education and credentialism; the more education and credentials a person acquires, the more they move away from being a worker and the closer they move towards being a professional. The concept of profession is

linked to the evolution and development of societies; thus, it is difficult to have only one definition. However, there are some features that can describe professions, such as: a high level of formative education, an organised structure, status, continued self-actualisation, structure of power and autonomy. As identified, the theory of professions has evolved: the first attempts to address it systematically took place in the mid-twentieth century; since then different views on the conceptualisation and analysis have emerged from sociology, which will be analysed in more depth in the following section.

## 3. Method and analysis

The qualitative method approach was utilised to understand the multifaceted social phenomena, and aids to create the topic from the participants' points of view (Abdelhakim et al., 2019). This procedure was also utilised to research the factors that have an effect on professional identity and whether this affects passion for work and turnover intention, and furthermore, to gain groundwork knowledge into the research subject. In accordance with Bitton and Dayan (2019), the two tools selected for this research to collect data, were semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which helped to stipulate what is relevant in this study and why, and as a useful source that contributes a new perception to current data (Abdelhakim et al., 2019).

Using two data-collecting tools prevented this study being affected by qualitative investigators' knowledge, as well as reducing bias and developing this study's trustworthiness. Reliability directs how truthfully the study techniques and methods generate data and is a result of the research validity (Patton, 2002). The triangulation method is employed in qualitative research to analyse the validity and reliability of the research in order to eliminate bias and improve the research's accuracy. Creswell and Miller (2000) defined triangulation as "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.126).

The interview protocol was drawn up to ensure all relevant aspects within the interviews were included. Questions were formulated using the four-phase process: (1) conforming interview questions in alignment with research questions, (2) developing an inquiry-based dialogue, (3) obtaining feedback on interview protocols, and (4) conducting a pre-test of the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) (Appendix 2).

The Michelin starred restaurants in London, UK, have been elected as the population for this research, due to what this group mutually shares, which are: experience, the high-level of competence, training, knowledge and passion, Michelin starred waiters represent the 'crème de la crème' or the elite of the occupation (Nascimento Filho et al., 2019). As such, this sector can offer specific information for this study to answer the research questions proposed.

**Interviews**

To achieve this research objective, 11 semi-structured interviews (numbers varied on how many interviewees fitted the profile inclusion criteria and saturation of data) were performed. This number along with relevant interviewees, waiters/hospitality lecturers/managers and partners, permitted this study to obtain a deeper understanding of the topic and collect attitudinal and behavioural data on the subject (Palmer and Gallagher, 2007; Shiu et al., 2009). There were diverse approaches for choosing the relevant interviewees: (1) the staff of Michelin starred restaurants would have more experience and knowledge about professional identity and work operation than scholars; (2) these interviewees were elected as they could verbalise their feelings and perceptions on their professional identity and work, providing trustworthy organisational and work evidence (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019); (3) senior managers, partners and academics are generally liable for company decision-making (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019). Table 1 demonstrates the extensive variety of interviewee profiles within the restaurant sector and the main theme developing during interviews. All of them were recruited by sending an invitation letter/email, informing them of the importance and consequences of high turnover in the hotel industry, and inviting them to be part of the study.

The interviews were conducted in a venue and at a time chosen by the participants (Onimisi, 2020). The interview took an average of 45-60 mins and all of them were digitally recorded and then transcribed in word-for-word detail to guarantee reliability (Abbas et al., 2020). The in-depth interview method was individual, semi-structured and undisguised to encounter essential attitudes, motivation, feelings and beliefs regarding the topic. Additionally, the interviewer, after introducing herself, established a good rapport with the participants using diverse tactics. In-depth interviews facilitate "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience" (Burgess, 1982, p.107). The in-depth interview questions were varied enough to be formulated on a different range of

themes. Sekaran (2003) maintains that individual interviews are significantly employed in research studies and this method can easily be adjusted, ensuring that the respondents have understood the questions accurately.

**Table 1: The aspects of in-depth interviews with waiters/hospitality lecturers/managers and partners**

**Interview duration: approximately 45-60 mins**

| Interview Date | Organisation | Interviewee position |
|---|---|---|
| 16.07.2017 | 5* Hotel | Restaurant Manager |
| 17.07.2017 | 4* Hotel | Deputy General Manager |
| 18.07.2017 | Restaurant Recommended in the Michelin Restaurants Guide | Marketing and Sales Manager |
| 19.07.2017 | Restaurant Recommended in the Michelin Restaurants Guide | Main Chef |
| 19.07.2017 | Restaurant Recommended in the Michelin Restaurants Guide | Waiter |
| 21.07.2017 | Global Travel and Hospitality Company | Vice President, Sales |
| 28.07.2017 | 5* Hotel | Dining Groups and Events Manager |
| 01.08.2017 | University | Associate Professor in Hospitality |
| 05.08.2017 | 4* Hotel | Waitress |
| 12.08.2017 | College | Lecturer in Hospitality and European coordinator Erasmus + |
| 19.08.2017 | Marketing and Business Strategy Consultant Company | Partner |
| **Topics discussed** | | |
| -     Discussion of waiters' profile and identity | | |
| -     Discussion of the key factors that influence the construct of waiters' professional identity | | |
| -     Discussion of the factor named as the one that is the most influential in the construction of waiters' professional identity | | |
| -     Discussion of the understanding of passion for work | | |
| -     Discussion of how restaurants could reduce employee mobility or turnover | | |

Source: The researchers

**Focus groups**

Furthermore, focus group consultations were performed inviting waiters as participants founded on one 5-star hotel restaurant brand and two Michelin starred restaurants in London. 3 focus groups were enough to identify all of the most prevalent themes within the data set

with a total of 18 waiters (10 women and 8 men) to encourage a satisfactory group communication level that developed discussion and interaction (Woodyatt et al., 2016) and to evaluate more openly the concept of professional identity. The waiters' ages were between 20 and 38 years old, with a mean of 24 years. The participants were sets of people from diverse social levels, who have made this research more valuable (Smithson, 2000). Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of data on the topic by being founded on a diversity of answers (Nordling and Pugh, 2019) (Table 2).

These respondents were questioned about their perception regarding occupational identities' antecedents and their impact on them, work engagement, and employee turnover in London restaurants. The questions were unstructured and open-ended, which permitted participants to respond in different ways. The information was gathered from focus groups of waiters from restaurants in London. The waiters were requested to contribute to this study to debate their opinions, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs towards occupational identity and their relationship to work engagement and employee turnover. This has been a useful technique for collecting, assessing and generating data about occupational identity. This technique of gathering information contributed to collecting data in a shorter amount of time than individual interviews, and also benefitted from the group dynamics. The members chose the timing and venues of the focus groups, and principally they were gathered in the dining room of the restaurants.

**Table 2: Focus group participants**

| Interview date | Number of participants | Interviewee occupations | Age range | Interview approx. length |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28.08.2017 | 6 | Waiting staff of restaurant I Recommended in the Michelin Restaurants Guide | 20-25 | 60 min. |
| 30.08.2017 | 6 | Waiting staff of restaurant II Recommended in the Michelin Restaurants Guide | 20-26 | 55 min |
| 01.09.2017 | 6 | Waiting staff of the restaurant in the 4* Hotel | 22-38 | 60 min |
| **Topics discussed** | | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| - | The understanding of waiters' professional identity |
| - | The understanding of passion for work |
| - | Discussion of the impact of professional identity on passion for work and turnover |
| - | The evaluation of the relationships between professional identity and its antecedents |
| - | Discussion of the most salient factor that influences the construction of professional identity |
| - | Discussion of the type of waiters' values in line with the organisation's objectives, goals and values |
| - | The influence of the interaction with peers, managers and customers with waiters in developing professional identity |
| - | Discussion of society's stereotyping of the waiting occupational group |
| - | Discussion of the relationship of 'who they are' with 'what they are' |

Source: The researchers

Following the typical protocol of qualitative methodology (Gummesson, 2000) and to conduct the current qualitative research, a thematic analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner, with coding procedures used and guided by the conceptual framework generated from the literature review.

QSR NVivo software Version 11 was utilised for theoretical coding, data management and to finalise results from the interviews and focus groups (Welsh, 2002). Thematic analysis was utilised first, manually, continued by the QSR NVivo software analysis. Additionally, the coding system to examine each word and phrase was utilised, which allowed examination of diverse implications assumed and intended by the waiters (Weston et al., 2001).

## 4. Results of the qualitative study

The analysis of this research has accepted seven antecedents (extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma) of professional identity that influence the relationship with passion for work and turnover intention. The main concepts for each construct are demonstrated in Appendix 1. Parallel with the literature, all participants emphasised the importance of developing and sustaining a constructive professional identity. In conformity with the literature reviewed, participants who emphasised the importance of a constructive professional identity noticed that it affects waiters' perceptions of the role and institute team, and highlighted its main effect in attracting and retaining waiters in an aggressive market.

**Professional identity -** There are several characteristics of the construction of professional identity that represent the opinion of waiters towards a workplace. Correlated literature and personnel in the interviews and focus groups represent those characteristics. This research supports the characteristics established from prior research outcomes, beginning with the definition of professional identity as "a set of attitudes, understanding and beliefs about people's roles, within the context of work" (Lingard et al., 2002, p.730). Outcomes advocate that the suggested meaning captures and reflects the field perfectly. That is, the majority of participants mostly agreed with the meaning of the feature of goals, abilities and values and the construction of the definition, which are the main aspects of the importance, and one participant with different words but the same meaning also highlighted this:

*"I think the professional identity will be very much driven by an interest for food, for great quality food, for great quality service, and by sharing that interest with people, with the community of people who work in that place and have the same goals"* (Partner, 50 years old).

**Antecedents to professional identity**

The following section establishes the antecedents of waiters' experiences in line with the qualitative results.

**Extroversion –** This qualitative study represented another important aspect of professional identity, which is the social understanding that comprises the interactive relationship with people (i.e. is an implication between two or more people that may vary in time from short to permanent) (Nargunde, 2013). Furthermore, hospitality offers an amount of social relationships and contacts (Baum, 2002). Social skills demonstrated within the research results have a significant effect in the creation of waiters' professional identity. It was clear that manager participants in this research contemplated that the waiter's correct profile would involve these elements. For example:

*"I think that if you want to get the best out of your waiter ... You recruit more a personality rather than skills, because I think skill can be important it's true, but the personality is something people will have or not ... someone who can keep the heart beat level of family with energy, or ... someone who can adapt himself, so ... a kind of actor somehow, or ... yeah, a bit of an actor!"* (Deputy general manager, 45 years old).

Similarly, maintaining and building effective social skills will be relevant, not only for those who work in the restaurant field, but in any sector. As described by one academic participant, who experienced working as a waiter whilst studying, and in reviewing his subsequent career development throughout the interview, offered the following deduction:

*"It is a special kind of work ... I think it is a great port. For me, personally, it was a great curriculum vitae because you understand, okay the customers, their way little by little ... and besides because you are working with customers from different cultures, countries and so on"* (Hospitality lecturer, 50 years old).

The example above is in line with Wildes' (2005; Ellingson et al*., 2016; Tews et al., 2014) research, which explains that staff employed in the restaurant sector could manage better with any future occupation. Besides, another restaurant sector employee emphasised the significance of social skills at the commencement of her career as one of the principal elements in supporting her professional identity. This reflection demonstrates how relevant social skills are in connecting personal identity to waiter career perceptions:

*"I love working with people. The food is important but the services is a million times more important than the food ..."* (Dining groups and events manager, 40 years old).

Remaining within the subject of social studies, the academic Homans (1958) proposed the Social Exchange theory, which specified that "give and take" develops the base of almost all interactions between people; conversely the importance may change as per the significance of these interactions (Obakpolo, 2015). Additionally, people's interactions in the workplace are explained as daily interpersonal relationships. These interactions are an essential element of the occupation and are frequently pleasant and creative, but sometimes the reason for tension and frustration. The next citations support this indication:

*"The main factor [of waiters' professional identity] is the interactions with other waiters"* (Waiter 1, 25 years old).

*"The main factors [of the construction of professional identity] are the interactions with your peers [kitchen staff and waiters]"* (Chef, 35 years old).

These findings prove that extroversion has a significant effect in the construction of waiters' professional identity because this career relies on and influences relationships with others. This factor might also involve a high level of comfort towards others. Being influential, sociable, and talkative illustrates a high level of the extroversion factor.

**Education –** A main element developing among managers, waiters and lecturers whilst synthesising the data is work-based learning. Work-based learning or learning transpires when a person is involved in the experiences, activities and purposes in the workplace (Reeve et al., 1998; Smith et al., 2005). Learning can be an outcome from the continuing work experiences, which can be offered in a manner that can be evidenced and assessed (Martin, 2003). Participants referred to many learning work experiences that had been educational as well as pleasurable, which had been fundamental in constructing their professional identity. For example, the Can-Do attitude course came from a thought that "whatever needs to be done, can be done; and will be done" (Phillips and DeLeon, 2017, p.201); or the 'Habit Loop' training course which comprises three aspects: a cue, a routine, and a reward; comprehending these aspects can develop an understanding into changing bad habits or creating good ones (Mellinger, 2014). These training courses, apart from being motivating to staff, could result in increasing job effectiveness and flexibility in being able to work in other roles. As two participants recorded:

*"...It is a programme that is 'Yes I can do it' (YICDI) used for ethical training purposes. The training programme that they give you (YICDI) empowers you as an individual, teaches you lots [of] skills"* (Dining groups and events manager, 40 years old).

*"So, it is called the Habit Loop. This training is basically based on small habits of the team. We build the team, we share the skills"* (Restaurant manager, 40 years old).

Some restaurant organisations purposely adapt to their staff learning preferences, while attempting to continue general training programmes as a secondary step. Conversely, staff may take for granted development as learning experience. In Jacobs and Washington's study (2003), they describe staff development as "an integrated set of planned programs, provided over a period, to help assure that all individuals have the competence necessary to perform to their fullest potential in support of the organization's goals" (p.344). Training programmes

develop individual competence by stimulating learning skills, perseverance, enhancing self-understanding and developing coping abilities. Training programmes empower learning and inspire the habit of life-long learning (Everard, 1993) and should support personal career development, leading to potential promotion of staff. This is what members mention:

*"It's an easy way for people to find a job, where you can learn on the field, on operation, you don't need to have done it before, basically it's easy if you are able to progress with it"* (Deputy general manager, 45 years old).

As the outcomes demonstrate, there is a strong signal that learning experience implicated by staff is provided across the restaurant sector. Conversely, those restaurants should be considerate about conducting purely learning experiences and disregarding entertainment. Yet, the precedent commitment of people working for the company is to learn, as some participants specified:

*"They need to have the feeling that they are constantly learning and getting new knowledge"* (Waiter, focus group 2) ... *"doing very different things every day, learning different things"*; to have some diversion is also important: *"[the] fun element of it was the fun element for me"* or *"the way in the current view is also an entertainer in many ways"* (Waiter, focus group 3).

Nevertheless, waiters wish to be considered in a learning experience because they appreciate the process of learning itself, rather than learning knowledge or having results expanded (Packer, 2006). This learning aspect of practice is in line with the understanding of Raymond (2010), relating to staff training and development as a consequence of the construction of professional identity.

**Brand standard -** In the company setting, role identities and their correlated behaviour expectations are transmitted to staff through the company standard (Alvesson and Willmott, 2004). In the organisation service background, appropriate standards would contain role-related expectations of what represents an upright staff member. Training manuals, job descriptions, marketing brochures, performance agreements and company newsletters could all contain norms about the meaning of being an upright employee in that particular company (Anderson-Gough et al., 2000). In order to perform successfully as staff of their companies and avoid disciplinary actions, individual staff members adopt this company standard to

differing degrees. By so doing, they construct professional identities founded on the organisational expectations denoted by the company standard (Blenkinsopp and Stalker, 2004).

With respect to the functional side of professional identity, the 'brand standard' as defined by Cast and Burke (2002), was expressed in participants' observations as an influencing aspect towards passion for work. For instance, one participant stated:

 "*To believe in the company you work for to identify yourself with standards of the company you work for because that creates respect and you also feel respected yourself and feel valued as well. I think for a Michelin restaurant, passion for food and giving great service is basics ... it's the task of the restaurant owners, the managers, what are the standard, what he stands for ... in consistence with the organisational standards should be, every candidate should have elegance. Because that's what our company is, our restaurant is. The waiter needs to feel and understand the standard of the food and the standard behind the food he really needs to have passion for it*" (Waiter 1, 25 years old).

These results are aligned with scholars (Ashcraft 2007; Stysko-Kunkowska et al., 2020; Van Riel and Fomburn, 2007) who stressed that the brand standard in which employees' professional identities are shaped has an influence on potential personnel, which implements an approach non-favourable/favourable to the company. Respondents in follow-up interviews maintain:

"*... for me it's what I love about this job and this restaurant is the fact that you cross the door and you feel like home ... You're gonna be with your family ... You know that the day is just gonna get better because you're with people you trust and who understand*" (Waiter, focus group 2).

"*I like to achieve good standard, because I am competitive and it motivates me. No, I have got different goals; restaurants - the only thing they want is to get money, and keep the guests happy, what I want is to feel comfortable and relax in my workplace*" (Waiter, focus group 3).

Statements made by the participants also highlighted that it is the company's responsibility to have a very clear restaurant standard; it will help to engage staff with the values of the company, to have passion for the product and will also help as a guideline to recruit new staff:

*"... it's incredibly important be very clear about the standard the organisation stands for ... and these standards will need to define how the organisation recruits waiters. So that the organisation gets the type of waiter that goes very well with its standard and creates a strong sense of belonging"* (Partner, 50 years old).

In summary, these outcomes are consistent with the findings of scholars (Burgoyne, 1979; Nolan and Harold, 2010; Wallace et al., 2014), who claimed that brand standard has a directional relationship to professional identity.

**Interference -** Merging multiple identities can engender circumstances for the growth of abilities and skills, social interaction and economic mobility. Holding identities is not without its complications (Frone, 2018; Settles, 2004) when two or more identities are difficult to combine and often there are confrontations or interference among them (Heckert et al., 2020). Likewise, in this research, managers' remarks are highlighted on some elements of identity interference. For instance:

*"... the uniqueness of working in a restaurant is that your working hours don't allow you to be with your family during key times and that's certainly fundamentally the issue with being a waiter. Especially, Michelin starred restaurants that have most work in evening times and during weekends"* (Deputy general manager, 45 years old).

The conflict of identity interference can be controlled by employers generating a sense of career and a sense of belonging, as the next interviewee's comment demonstrated:

*"If you have a management team that understands how to create a sense of belonging and sense of career it will be very easy to reconcile your professional identity with your private self. But, it would also be dependent on individual situations. If you're a young person who is working in Michelin starred restaurants you've got a career ahead of you, then if you are a very much older person there does not seem any sort of further development in the career in the future"* (Partner, 50 years old).

Harmonising all the different identities is not a quick fix. Professional identity forms and affects a large part of most people's lives, such as the amount of time spent with friends and family, as well as a person's economic situation. Professional practice influences how individuals think of themselves, but the temptation to be categorised by occupation must be resisted. Outside the workplace, employees are individuals and need to obtain their self-worth from other sources.

**Authenticity -** The standards of the company and the team of supervisors have a great impact on authenticity in the workplace. A prior study (Buchanan, 2020) began to scrutinise the influence on authenticity at work, and indicated that the better the staff feeling of authenticity, the better their self-reported functioning, commitment, and job satisfaction. Achieving the equilibrium of employees' professional identity remaining true to themselves while also accomplishing company success and prosperity is key. Some proof of this was offered by the qualitative outcomes. The idea of balance was mentioned by a respondent:

*"You need to be yourself, but the rules and policies are also there to protect the waiter ... but the policies and standards should not be something that are stopping you from being yourself"* (Marketing and sales manager, 53 years old).

Another individual mentioned the somewhat tactically driven managerial viewpoint of employee authenticity in his response:

*"So, organisations need to first of all recruit the people who fit their needs and their values, so that they have got a high chance of connecting well with others, peers and managers, and the organisation needs to be run in a way that people can be themselves. So that actually the values of the organisation and the values and the passions of the individuals overlap"* (Partner, 50 years old).

Waiters enjoy a considerable level of authenticity in their role, as well as following the company standard. Based on this authenticity, some employees actively maintain, implement, or adapt organisational values and beliefs into their professional identities by rhetorically supporting these values and beliefs, yet expressing disagreement when these policies and standards stop employees from being themselves. Besides maintaining authenticity for

employees as a part of their professional identities, the defined reference group (waiting group) also leads to growth from a professional viewpoint.

**Stigma -** Neither responses of others to stigma nor the responses of those who are stigmatised are identical (Perrin et al. 2020; Pinel, 1999). Not every individual of every stigmatised group is disrupted to the same extent and to the same level when faced with prospective stereotypical conduct. Steele (1997) states that for a stigma to exist, it has to be self-relevant, which means an expectancy of being the target of a stigma or perceived stigmatisation. Conversely, expecting that one is a sufferer of stigma damages self-certainty and social self-esteem (Ruggiero and Taylor, 1997). Therefore, excessive distress about one's stigma condition can have a negative impact on professional identity, and affect any opportunity of disproving the stigma wrong (Bosmans et al., 2016; Pinel, 1999). Findings from interviews offered some evidence for this proposition. For instance, one respondent referred to the link:

*"If someone comes with a negative idea about us, it really influences me positively in stimulating me to work harder to show them that the idea that they have of us, it is completely wrong"* (Waiter 1, 25 years old).

Similarly, another interviewee who was referring to society's opinion about this profession argued:

*"... for me it was, I am going to prove to people that being a waiter is nothing to be ashamed of. I am happy that I am not the only one who has the same feelings as me"* (Dining groups and events manager, 40 years old).

In contrast, several interviewees supported that the waiters' stigmatising by society has had a very negative impact on them and forced them to resign and search for new career sectors:

*"It is not good, people look at us like someone without qualifications and very basic general knowledge"* (Waiter, focus group 2).

Similarly, others members of the focus groups reported:

*"It [stigmatising] has a negative impact and that is why no one wants to have this profession in the long-term"* (Waiter, focus group 1).

These findings demonstrate the dominant effect of sociocultural stigma on the development of employees' professional identity. In the current studies, interviewees were not clearly aware of stigma content, but simply a sociocultural classification to which they fit in subtly. Conceivably, significant evidence found that when one of the waiters' different identities is made salient as predominant, performance can be debilitated as well as facilitated. The present research indicates that waiters' quantitative performance can be influenced both negatively and positively without any specific instructions. Therefore, the suggestion is that more attention needs to be paid to sociocultural influences. Another suggestion that came from the results of this study is that when the fact that people have different identities is adopted, self-stigmatisation influences may be approached far more advantageously than previously identified. Up to the present time, people have been victims of self-stigmatisation. However, the probability exists that intermediations in this situation, an untried strategy that made one factor of identification salient over others, may be applied to deliberately affect waiter's professional identity.

**Salience -** Salience can work as the degree to which precise incentives are exhibited to others in their situation, and the foundation of social salience is linked to the setting in which an incentive occurs (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Incentives are crucial in the creation of professional identity. The dichotic theory of salience by Guido (1995, 1996; Shepherd and Williams, 2018) maintains that an incentive is in-salient when it is incompatible in a situation, or it is re-salient when it is compatible in a setting; as a result, in-salience and re-salience are two juxtaposing qualities of the same idea. Following this perspective, when asked about the most powerful influences that encourage the building of their professional identity, most of the respondents agreed:

*"I think, first of all there is a passion for food that is very important and attracts people in places ... I know from the work I am doing that people, especially young people today, have an increasingly passionate relationship with food ... they're called millennials for example, so people who became adults around the year 2000 spend more money and more time for food than the previous generation. There's a lot more passion for food, a lot more passion for having great food experience. So, I think that the passion for food is certainly something that*

*attracts people ... or the factor that defines the identity of people that work in those restaurants"* (Partner, 50 years old).

Another feature given as a significant component in the construction of professional identity by interviewees was the education and career advancement of the waiter, as this participant pointed out:

*"Identity is all about personal development. There has to be personal development in it [professional identity]. So, it is how you become a better human or better professional"* (Restaurant manager, 40 years old).

Waiters' professional identity has an influence on a range of stimuli at the workplace. The participants of this qualitative study have answered the research questions: of all the factors that we have been talking about so far (extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma), which one is the most influential in the construction of a waiter's professional identity? Their response has been that the salience of this stimuli increases at work in different keyways: education, passion, stigma and brand standard.

This study presents significant evidence of the episodic and dynamic nature of professional identity in the workplace. Several influences have been identified in changes in salience. Different ways have been defined in which such increases in salience stimuli influence how restaurant organisations are conceptualised and experienced. By going beyond studying these stimuli simply and searching routes experienced, it has contributed to a more nuanced and richer understanding of its significance to behaviour within organisations.

**Consequences of professional identity**

Research denotes that professional identity can produce a meaningful result. A favourable professional identity must be cultivated to lead to a favourable outcome, such as a reduced rate of staff renewal, and healthy passion for work.

**Passion -** Managers and lecturers generally agreed about the passion characteristic as part of waiters' professional identity: conclusions from the qualitative research showed that a vital component associated with a waiter's decision when selecting a restaurant to work in is the requirement for energetic, passionate understanding of the restaurant food speciality.

Moreover, the textual examination of the respondents shows an accent on brand identity, concept of the restaurant and waiters' sense of fitting in, which influences their opinion. The subsequent observations highlight the interviewees' evaluation of this conclusion:

*"[Waiters] are very passionate about food, and they want to grow with the industry"* (Chef, 35 years old).

*"You [as a waiter] need to have passion for the profession and if you do not have this feeling you will leave soon"* (Waiter 1, 25 years old).

The above citation is in line with definitions of employee passion from practitioners and academic lecturers (Mann, 2020; Newman and Harrison, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2009) as well as the employee engagement authors (Ricardianto et al., 2020; Siu et al., 2010; Tulasi and Vijayalakshmi, 2012), who assert that staff are engaged when harnessed as company members themselves to their work roles; this is described in commitment, personal expression and employing themselves cognitively, physically and emotionally during role performances. Furthermore, interviewees affirmed the following:

*"I think [what waiters] want is to give a good service to offer the best they can do to people joining for lunch, dinner, drinks whatever it is ... because they represent the company and they want to be their best to represent the company ... so yeah you see professional identity as part or linked with their organisational identity as well ... In this context yes"* (Marketing and sales manager, 53 years old).

The preceding statement demonstrates that waiters should be viewed as brand ambassadors, since they are the representatives of the restaurant's philosophy. Generally, passion for work is the exterior image of an employee's professional identity; commitment, engagement and passion for the job can impact the viewpoint of a company's employee and aid in creating a structure of expectations about the type of work an organisation carries out.

**Turnover -** High rate of staff renewal is associated with reduced service and fragmented company achievement (Ahmad et al., 2019). Su (2020) has proved that resolve to quit a company is one of the marks of turnover. From an organisational perspective, increased staff renewal rate is costly due to expenses arising from recruitment, selection and training

(Morrell et al., 2004). Additionally, turnover could influence worker morale (Morrell et al., 2004) as well as damaging the effectiveness and proficiency of the company (Agoi, 2015).

On the other hand, there is a connection between retaining and engaging workers (Frank, 2004). Renewal rate is a continued area of interest for management researchers. Practical research has shown that a greater passion for work decreases employee renewal rate (Brittle, 2020; Schaufeli and Baker, 2004). Moreover, Cole and Bruch (2006) have indicated that employee discernments of a robust company identity and organisational commitment may influence staff renewal rate in certain circumstances, according to the level of accountability within the organisation. Various papers have proved that passion for the job is positively linked to the resolve to continue to work for that organisation (Harter et al., 2002; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Similarly the outcomes of the present research demonstrate that:

*"Organisations recruit people not only based on skill but also on values, and make sure that they get a certain number of people into the organisation that they know will fit ... I think it may also be important not to talk about them as waiters anymore ... why call them waiters? ... People working in Michelin starred restaurants they're not really waiters, they provide service to the customers which goes well beyond serving dishes ... It's a highly skilled job. So, I think restaurants needs to recognise that they have to offer a development programme to the waiting staff. And if they do that, they manage to keep the people much longer than in a traditional waiting job"* (Partner, 50 years old).

Staff recruited with guaranteed attachment fundamentals are crucial for organisations, as they are more likely to stay in their job. Loyal employees must be valued by being promoted. Organisations must create training programmes for employees so that workers can discover job satisfaction and value in their work.

Furthermore, the research set out here is the first to explore professional identity as a construct, including how this relates to staff renewal rate and love for the job; there was no hypothetical corroboration from prior analyses. This research, as a qualitative fact-finding study, provides plentiful information on which to base further exploration and a more in-depth understanding of the subsequent research questions: RQ1 - What are the factors that influence professional identity? RQ2 - What are the principal influences on professional identity affecting passion for work and staff turnover? The literature review signposted the research

conceptual development agenda, while the qualitative research supported the research model with negligible exemptions. The subsequent outline is the consequence of that literature study and is supported by the qualitative research. The six existing antecedents have been supplemented by three previously unexplored antecedents as impacts on the formation of the professional identity of waiters, (Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**
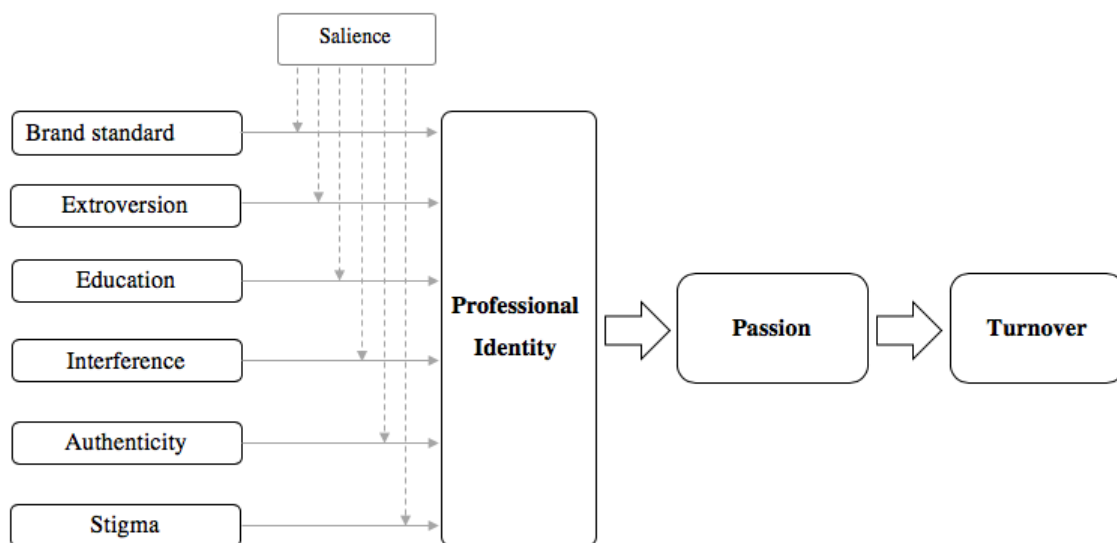


**Conclusion**

In line with the literature, all interviewees emphasised the significance of sustaining and developing a favourable professional identity. In alignment with the literature reviewed, participants who stressed the value of a favourable professional identity noted that it influenced waiters' perceptions of the role and organisation team, and emphasised its main influence in attracting and retaining waiters in today's competitive market. Furthermore, three new constructs of the antecedents of professional identity were identified, namely education, passion and extroversion (Table 3).

Table 3: The number of final constructs after literature and qualitative research

| Initial constructs from Literature review | Literature and qualitative constructs |
|---|---|
| Brand standard | Brand standard |
| Interferences | Interferences |

| | |
|---|---|
| Authenticity | Authenticity |
| Stigma | Stigma |
| Salience | Salience |
| Professional Identity | Professional Identity |
| Turnover | Turnover |
| | Passion (New Construct) |
| | Extroversion (New construct) |
| | Education (New construct) |

Source: Developed for the current study by the researcher

This research is one of the first pragmatic analyses in the UK, the results of which supply a more conclusive comprehension of the role of waiters' professional identity in retaining staff and maintaining passion for the job in London restaurants. The qualitative study, utilising interviews and focus groups, allowed a hypothetical structure to be enlarged. This research supplies and analyses more defined investigations regarding the ways in which the practical decisions made by researchers could affect the strength of the links between a professional identity and its antecedents, and subsequent proposals. The consequences linked to the rationalisation and growth of professional identity in a work setting have been expounded and demonstrate that professional identity can be a key factor used by executives in impacting staff retention.

## 5. Research implications

The impact on further study is the most vital element of research, by concentrating on accompanying the relevance of the analysis to expand the subject being reviewed. The impact of this research is set out in the subsequent paragraphs, beginning with the hypothetical accounts and suggestion of procedural inputs, to advance the confines of present knowledge.

### Theoretical contribution

This study contributes to the academic body of knowledge for scholars and restaurant managers by analysing the role of professionalism in identity construction with regards to waiters. As Wildes (2005) has argued, the issue of restaurant waiters' professional identity is of vital significance to the way they identify themselves, and, therefore, correlates to matters of satisfaction, passion for work and employee turnover; however, this relationship has not been analysed.

Several research studies in the restaurant sector have been conducted with the aim of increasing the professional image (Klein, 2002; Lee-Ross, 2008; Raub and Streit, 2006), but not in connection to passion for work and employee turnover. However, this study has provided a research model that defines the relationship between the constructs of professional identity, and the aspects that influence professional identity and its consequences. In addition, the study has addressed the research gaps, specifically in the area of professional identity construction, such as the following (Daly et al., 2020; Hofhuis, et al., 2016; Walsh and Gordon, 2008): the establishment of an interdisciplinary model based on social sciences for professional identity is the main contribution. The principal challenge has been to build an interdisciplinary understanding of relationships, which can be interpreted into outcomes with operational significance to the research (Dahl, 2020); another set of gaps in the literature on professional identity surround the absence of exploratory models of conceptualisations offering a common terminology and of structural managerial approaches.

This paper has been one of the first empirical studies via a synthesis of the antecedents: extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma to explain professional identity within a more holistic approach. Furthermore, a relevant contribution has been made to the literature on passion for work and employee turnover by developing the research model. Consequently, the outcomes of this research promise benefits in the restaurant context. Moreover, these outcomes require significant attention when invoking the professional identity framework and employing it in another context within any established theories in the restaurant milieu.

**Managerial contribution**
This research offers executive input for restaurant managers and policy-makers looking to understand the form of the connection between the construct of professional identity and the features in its forebears (brand standard, passion, extroversion, education, interference, authenticity, stigma) from employees' perspective and the impact this has on passion for the job and employees' renewal rate. Various possible executive suggestions will be established.

A well-defined understanding of the scope of the pertinent conceptions, can aid restaurant managers in developing a waiter's professional identity, which will generate passion for work and reduce employee turnover intention. There are various possible outcomes from the

formation of an agentic role in constructing professional identities. The agentic role refers to people who designate themselves as ideal representatives who possess the right qualities of a social identity, with the same values as the company, where the organisation is an image of employees' self-concept. Additionally, the manner in which a waiter interrelates with colleagues (in-groups) and exchanges objectives with the customers (out-groups) shows that employees can assist in forming a professional identity, by transmitting and demonstrating these emotions about their own profession to the audience (out-groups). If this interrelation works well, a low-status profession (stigma) would be benefitted by developing social validity and work engagement. Likewise, this research could be helpful in giving more proactive solutions for restaurant managers. By establishing the significant components of a construction of professional identity (extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma), restaurant managers could improve comprehension of the importance of professional identity. Furthermore, the restaurant managers should have a well-defined indication of management practices and the reliability of their employees' professional identity (Cumming, 2011; Dahl, 2020; UKHospitality, 2019).

The result of the current research proposes that restaurateurs should be cautious about coordinating a positive brand standard to induce helpfulness and desired responses, as well as improving organisation recognition. Restaurant managers and policy-makers should comprehend the important effect of passion on employees' responses to the organisations. The subsequent important relationship between professional identity and authenticity proposes that managers should focus on the value of the authenticity that is shown through professional identity. Being authentic in the workplace is highly significant in that it represents a 'true self' element of professional identity and it is influenced by the organisation's values, policies and standards; it is interpreted to be one of the principal factors of the construction of professional identity (Lingard et al., 2002; Rodrigues and Mogarro, 2019; Muzio et al. 2020) reflected on the enhancing of the organisational experience. Finally, the consequences of professional identity (passion for work and employee turnover) stipulate a significant function in encouraging employee perception.

## 6. Limitations and directions for future research

This investigation was carried out in Michelin starred restaurants and five star hotels in London, and is therefore conducted in and limited to a single context. In another UK town or city, the results may be different. The research proposal may be another inadequacy of this

study. Semi-structured interviews with strategic executive members of the UK hospitality industry were carried out as part of the research, as well as with restaurant managers responsible to a large extent for building a waiter's professional identity, as well as for staff turnover and job satisfaction, to investigate the viewpoints of respondents unhindered by "what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature" (Cresswell, 2013, p.48). So, qualitative questions were reinforced by the investigation and may have reduced the possibility of generalisation. Therefore, more investigation in this area is recommended.

The qualitative investigation and the study proposal were restricted to UK restaurant managers and officials. Nevertheless, managers' attitudes can be very different to customer opinions, and this research did not take the latter into account. Involving customer opinions could diversify the research, and therefore caution should be used when scrutinising these results. Future research should take into account the endorsement of the results of this study, especially in different cultural settings. A replication research study is recommended to demonstrate greater generalisability and legitimacy of the associations. Furthermore, the proven model could be assessed in a future study utilising different investigation techniques and in particular confirmatory statistical methods.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Theories

| Key findings | Salience | Professional Identity | Antecedents | | | | Employee Turnover | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Brand Standard | Interference | Authenticity | Stigma | | |
| **Culture, identity, and belonging in the 'culinary underbelly'** Goffman (1959) illustrates the role of the individual in identity construction through a dramaturgical lexicon that defines interaction as a performance that is influenced by the environment (the audience) and employed by individuals (the actors) to provide others with particular impressions. There are interesting parallels between a theatre and a professional kitchen where chefs as individual actors perform their various tasks with differing degrees of flair and attachment to the craft of cooking (see Bourdain, 2001). | | √ | | | | | | Palmer *et al.,* 2010 |
| **Using politeness to model the psychosocial dynamics of power in organisational interaction** Exploring specific motives and linguistic outcomes of high and low power actors, describing the behavioural egalitarianism associated with organic organisations, and suggesting how the demand characteristics of face-to-face interaction create oligarchic tendencies that militate against the success of workplace participation. (The acts look after the way the talk to manager or laugh about the jokes… | | | √ | | | | | Morand, 2014 |
| **Embarrassment and social organisation: A multiple identities model** Persons should therefore be more likely to occupy—and iteratively switch between—multiple identities when they are faced with larger audiences in local encounters. | | | | √ | | | | Lizardo and Collett, 2013 |

| Title and Description | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The drama of social life: A dramaturgical handbook**<br>Thinking about authenticity in terms of dramaturgy focuses on how authentic selves are expressed and negotiated in situations. | | | | | | √ | | | | Edgley, 2016 |
| **The Presentation of Self: Dramaturgical Theory and Generations in Organisations**<br>The roles (or identities) that individuals perform when engaging in social actions. Goffman argues that individuals are "on stage" when "acting" out roles in order to fulfill societal expectations (stigma) (these expectations form from Mannheim's "illusion" of a "gestalt," or expectations on how an individual should behave based on his or her membership in a generation) | | | | | | | √ | | | Urick, 2014 |
| **A predictive study of emotional labor and turnover**<br>Hochschild's (1983) dramaturgical approach to emotional labor states that emotional labour consists of the effortful use of surface acting and deep acting to conform to display expectations (Grandey, 2000). Surface acting involves suppressing one's felt emotions and faking the desired emotional display. Consequently, surface acting is considered to be ''acting in bad faith'' because it entails modifying emotional displays without changing internal feelings (Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987). On the other hand, deep acting involves actually changing one's feelings in order to elicit the appropriate emotional display. Accordingly, deep acting is considered to be ''acting in good faith'' because it involves trying to change internal emotional states to match organisational expectations (Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987). | | | | | | | | √ | | Chau et al., 2009 |
| **Influence of Employer Brand Image on Employee Identity**<br>Individual identity and identification with the organisation 'who am I? | | √ | √ | | | | | | | Shaker and Ahmed 2014 |
| **Social Identity, Self-Categorisation, and the Communication of Group Norms**<br>Self-concept comes from the identification group<br>Salience is not only a cognitive perceptual process but also a social process in which people may compete or ''negotiate'' over category salience. | √ | | | | √ | | | | | Hogg and Reid, 2006 |
| **Work Identity: Clarifying the Concept**<br>Professional identity develops through the interaction between individual-workplace | √ | | | | √ | | | | | Bothma, Lloyd and Khapova, 2015 |
| **Authentic Leadership: A Self, Leader, and Spiritual Identity Perspective** | | | | | √ | | √ | | | Klenke, 2007 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Authenticity:** the feeling and practice of being true to one's self or others | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Social Identity Theory**<br>**Inter-groups:** in-group will discriminate against out-group to enhance their self-image<br>stigma: Putting people into groups and categories | | | | | | | | √ | | McLeod, 2008 |
| **Professional identity: Engaging socio-cultural perspectives**<br>To understand particular professional identity is to understand how society views identification groups | | √ | | | | | | | | Phelan and Kinsella, 2009 |
| **Staying or leaving: A combined social identity and social exchange approach to predicting employee turnover intentions**<br>**Employee turnover**: According to social identity theory, however, employees who are strongly identified with their organisations refrain from turnover because of a partial overlap (things in common) between their self and the organization. | | | | | | | | | √ | Avanzi et al., 2014 |

# APPENDIX 2

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Aim of the research:** This research is about exploring the influence of professional identity. It analyses the forces that influence professional identity and whether professional identity can favourably influence work engagement and employee turnover. This research will be of value in providing more proactive solutions for restaurant managers to improve work engagement and reduce the high turnover of staff, and will stimulate further investigations for academics and restaurant managers about the role of work in identity construction with regards to waiters.

Your perspective on these subjects is very valuable for me to understand the relation between professional identity and employee turnover. I guarantee that everything talked about today will remain confidential. It would assist in the process if you permitted me to record the interview. If you do not desire to be recorded at any point during the process, please do not hesitate to let me know and the recorder will be switched off. If there are any questions that perturb you or that you find inappropriate, we can omit them and continue with the following topic.

**About the interviewee**

**Title:**

**Interviewee:**

**Position:**

**Personal responsibilities:**

**How long have you been with the organisation?**

**Name of organisation:**

**Date:**

**Length of the interview:**

**PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY**

Professional identity is a set of perceptual components, such as goals, abilities, professional interests and meanings connecting the individual's identity to their career perspectives as generated by previous experience (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Bauman, 2004; Cameron and Spreitzer, 2011; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Delanty, 1995; Hirschi, 2012; Ibarra, 1999; Jenkins, 1996; Pratt et al., 2006; Snow and Anderson, 1987).

| Questions | Source |
|---|---|
| What is your understanding of professional identity? | 1st author |
| How would you describe the professional identity in your organisation? | 1st author |
| What do you think are the key factors that influence and help to construct professional identity in the workplace? | 1st author |
| Do you identify your career perspective with your individual identity? For example, goals, abilities, professional interests and meanings. Can you explain this further? | 1st author |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of professional identity) Why? | 1st author |

| BRAND STANDARD | |
|---|---|
| The brand standard in which the employee's identity is created, institutes the identity of the organisation as an employer. It is a long-term strategy that comprehends the firm's value, policies and behaviour system towards the objectives of interesting, encouraging, and retaining the organisation's current and potential staff, and correlated stakeholders with regards to an organisation (Ashcraft, 2007; Conference Board, 2001; Kargas and Tsokos, 2020 Sullivan, 2004; Wallace et al., 2014). | |
| **Questions** | **Source** |
| What is your understanding of Brand standard? | 1st author |
| What types of values, policies and behaviour systems are used by your organisation that tend to encourage and retain current staff, and attract potential staff? | 1st author |
| How do you find this correlation between Brand standard and employees' professional identity? Why? | 1st author |
| Would you please explain how you feel the atmosphere is among co-workers? | Bendaraviciene et al., 2014; Berthon et al., 2005; Hillebrandt and Ivens, 2013 |
| Was the communication of the brand values useful to you or would you suggest alternatives? | |
| Does the organisation offer secure jobs? How do they achieve this? | |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of Brand standard) Why? | 1st author |

**INTERFERENCE**

Interference is the result of having multiple identities, which happens when the pressure of one identity hinders the performance of another identity, and may create a number of physical and negative psychological outcomes (Cooke and Rousseau 1984; Coverman, 1989; Fried et al., 1998; Gerson, 1985; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; O'Driscoll, et al., 1992; Settles, 2004; Thoits, 1991; Van Sell et al., 1981).

| Questions | Source |
|---|---|
| What is your understanding of multiple identities interference in the workplace? | 1st author |
| Please state your experience of being a member of staff as well as mum/dad/friend, etc. | 1st author |
| Can you please list some of your multiple identities? | 1st author |
| How do these multiple identities interfere with each other? | 1st author |
| Would you please explain the key impact of this interference on your professional identity? | 1st author |
| How do you cope with this situation? | 1st author |
| Do you find any positive correlation between interference and professional identity? | 1st author |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of interference) Why? | 1st author |

| Questions | Source |
|---|---|
| **AUTHENTICITY**<br><br>Individuals, in particular, look for an authentic identity: 'being yourself' or 'becoming yourself' by the link between one's personal experiences and outer manifestations, operating and communicating upon this personal experience in the workplace. On some occasions, authenticity can position itself as a rebellion against social order (Aupers and Houtman, 2010; Menard and Brunet, 2011; Lietdka, 2008; Roberts, 2007). | |
| Can you please explain the difference between being yourself or following your organisation's standard? | 1st author |
| Can you apply both being yourself and following your organisation's standard in your workplace? | 1st author |
| Based on your personal experience, which of being yourself or following your organisation's standard works better for your workplace? Why? | 1st author |
| Do you agree that part of professional identity formation is being or becoming yourself in your organisation? | 1st author |
| Do you find a negative or positive correlation between employee authenticity and professional identity? | 1st author |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of authenticity) Why? | 1st author |

| STIGMA | |
|---|---|
| Stigma provides the simplified essence of a group's overall perception of a person or group by downplaying individual differences and exaggerating commonalities, as communicated between individuals and groups. Individuals tend to keep their stigma of specific groups even after there is a significant indication that disconfirms the actual stigma that they are using (Hamilton and Sherman, 1994; Fiske, 1998; Hilton and von Hippel, 1996; Nadler and Clark, 2011; Stedman, 2006; Von Hippel et al., 1995). | |
| **Questions** | **Source** |
| What is your understanding of stigma? | 1st author |
| How do you feel your professional group is stigmatise by society? | Fiske et al., 2002 |
| What is the simplified concept of the society's overall perception of your professional group? | 1st author |
| Does society retain its stigma of your professional group even after there is a significant indication that disconfirms the actual stigma that it is using? | 1st author |
| Based on your experience, has this stigma had a negative or positive impact on your professional identity? | 1st author |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of stigma) Why? | 1st author |

| SALIENCE | |
|---|---|
| Salience theory is still an imprecise term. However, it has been defined as a propriety of a stimulus that permits it to be noticed and to stand out compared to others in the same context; therefore, and according to the dichotic theory of salience, this stimulus will be in-salient when it is incongruent with a specific environment and re-salient when it is congruent in a specific environment (Alba et al., 1991; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Guido, 1995; 1996; Hastie et al., 1984; Heckler and Childers, 1992; Mowen, 1993). | |
| **Questions** | **Source** |
| What is your understanding of salient or noticeable stimulations in your workplace? | 1st author |
| What type of stimuli in your workplace influences the construction of your professional identity? | 1st author |
| Can you give an example when in-salient or a low level of stimuli is incongruent to your professional identity in your workplace? | 1st author |
| Can you give an example when re-salient or a high level of stimuli is congruent to your professional identity in your workplace? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to your organisation's Brand standard? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to your self-concept? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to the employee interaction in your workplace? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to your multiple identities interference? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to authenticity in your workplace? | 1st author |

| | |
|---|---|
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to your organisation (inter-group)? | 1st author |
| Do you think your professional identity is congruent (related) or incongruent (not related) to your organisational stigma? | 1st author |
| Do the most important things you do in life involve your occupation? | Kanungo, 1982 |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of salience) Why? | 1st author |

| TURNOVER | |
|---|---|
| Employee turnover is the movement, attrition, mobility, exit, migration or succession of employees between jobs, firms and occupations within the labour market, as well as the rotation between the states of unemployment and employment (Abassi et al., 2000; Hom and Griffeth, 1995; Ivancevich and Glueck, 1989; Morrell et al., 2004; Woods, 1995). | |
| **Questions** | **Source** |
| What is your understanding of employee turnover? | 1st author |
| How do you think your organisation could reduce migration, mobility or employee turnover? | 1st author |
| From your personal experience, what are the most valuable factors to keep working with the same organisation? | 1st author |
| What type of attributes could competitors have to attract employees? | 1st author |
| Do you find any correlation between work engagement and employee turnover? | 1st author |
| Do you find any correlation between professional identity and employee turnover? | 1st author |
| Do you often think about quitting your present job? | Yin-Fah, 2010 |
| Do you agree with this statement? (definition of turnover) Why? | 1st author |

**SUMMARY**

The interviewer will recapitulate the significant points of the interview. Additionally, the planned conceptual framework developed from the literature will be displayed. The interviewer will request if the participant would like to make any additions or changes.

The interviewer thanks the participants for their valuable time and kind cooperation.