

## REVIEWING OPEN KITCHEN CONCEPT REGARDING ITS EFFECT ON MOTIVATION OF CHEFS

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## Abstract

The open kitchen concept has been evaluated from the perspective of chefs in quite a few studies. Further research is necessary to investigate the impact of chefs' working conditions in open kitchens on their professional development, motivation, and work processes. This study aims to understand the impact of open kitchen working experiences on chefs who have previously worked in closed kitchens. Specifically, it examines how these experiences affect their mood, motivation, and creativity in the kitchen. For the research, twenty five chefs working in Michelin Starred restaurants in Turkey were interviewed with semi-structured questions. The answers were deciphered through descriptive analysis. The results show that the chefs responded positively to working in open kitchens. Chefs are motivated, happy, self-confident and satisfied while working. Working in front of customers causes them to be more careful, attentive, clean and self-confident. Customers follow the chefs in the restaurant with interest, wonder how the dishes are made and want to learn. This interaction of customers positively affects the chefs' work. Finally, the interaction between the chefs has positive results. The chefs exercise caution in their communication with customers, avoiding colloquial language, profanity, and insulting expressions. More importantly, this leads to the cessation of patriarchal behaviors. As a result, the open kitchen concept application is recommended to the enterprises since the motivation and satisfaction of the chefs will be a factor that will strengthen their professional development, recognition in the restaurant and the popularity of the kitchen will strengthen their professional ties.

**Keywords:** Open Kitchen; Chefs; Motivation; Restaurant Concepts; Working in the Service Industry

## REVENDO O CONCEITO DE COZINHA ABERTA EM RELAÇÃO AO SEU EFEITO NA MOTIVAÇÃO DOS CHEFS

## Resumo

O conceito de cozinha aberta foi avaliado sob a perspectiva dos chefs em vários estudos. Há necessidade de mais estudos sobre como as condições de trabalho dos chefs em cozinhas abertas afetam o desenvolvimento profissional, a motivação e o processo de trabalho. O objetivo deste estudo é entender como os chefs que já trabalharam em cozinhas fechadas antes, como suas experiências de trabalho em cozinhas abertas afetam seu humor, motivação e criatividade na cozinha. Para a pesquisa, vinte e cinco chefs que trabalham em restaurantes com estrelas Michelin na Turquia foram entrevistados com perguntas semiestruturadas. As respostas foram decifradas por meio de análise descritiva. Os resultados mostram que os chefs responderam positivamente ao trabalho em cozinhas abertas. Os chefs se sentem motivados, felizes, autoconfiantes e satisfeitos enquanto trabalham. Trabalhar na frente dos clientes faz com que eles sejam mais cuidadosos, atentos, limpos e autoconfiantes. Os clientes acompanham os chefs no restaurante com interesse, perguntam como os pratos são feitos e querem aprender. Essa interação dos clientes afeta positivamente o trabalho dos chefs. Por fim, a interação entre os chefs tem resultados positivos. Os chefs são cuidadosos em sua comunicação com os clientes, evitam gírias, palavrões e insultos e, o que é mais importante, isso leva ao fim dos comportamentos patriarcais. Como resultado, a aplicação do conceito de cozinha aberta é recomendada para as empresas, pois a motivação e a satisfação dos chefs serão um fator que fortalecerá seu desenvolvimento profissional, o reconhecimento no restaurante e a popularidade da cozinha fortalecerão seus laços profissionais.

**Palavras-chave:** Cozinha aberta; Cozinheiros; Motivação; Conceitos de restaurante; Trabalho na indústria de serviços.

## REVISIÓN DEL CONCEPTO DE COCINA ABIERTA EN RELACIÓN CON SU EFECTO EN LA MOTIVACIÓN DE LOS CHEFS

## Resumen

El concepto de cocina abierta ha sido evaluado desde la perspectiva de los chefs en unos pocos estudios. Se necesita más investigación para investigar el impacto de las condiciones laborales de los chefs en cocinas abiertas en su desarrollo profesional, motivación y procesos de trabajo. Este estudio tiene como objetivo comprender el impacto de las experiencias laborales en cocinas abiertas en chefs que anteriormente han trabajado en cocinas cerradas. Específicamente, examina cómo estas experiencias afectan su estado de ánimo, motivación y creatividad en la cocina. Para la investigación, se entrevistaron con preguntas semiestructuradas a veinticinco chefs que trabajan en restaurantes con estrellas Michelin en Turquía. Las respuestas se descifrarán a través de análisis descriptivo. Los resultados muestran que los chefs respondieron positivamente a trabajar en cocinas abiertas. Los chefs están motivados, felices, seguros de sí mismos y satisfechos mientras trabajan. Trabajar frente a los clientes les hace ser más cuidadosos, atentos, limpios y seguros de sí mismos. Los clientes siguen a los chefs en el restaurante con interés, se preguntan cómo se preparan los platos y quieren aprender. Esta interacción con los clientes afecta positivamente el trabajo de los chefs. Finalmente, la interacción entre los chefs tiene resultados positivos. Los chefs ejercen precaución en su comunicación con los clientes, evitando lenguaje coloquial, blasfemias y expresiones insultantes. Más importante aún, esto conduce al cese de comportamientos patriarcales. Como resultado, se recomienda la aplicación del concepto de cocina abierta a las empresas, ya que la motivación y satisfacción de los chefs será un factor que fortalecerá su desarrollo profesional, el reconocimiento en el restaurante y la popularidad de la cocina fortalecerán sus lazos profesionales.

**Palabras clave:** Cocina Abierta; Chefs; Motivación; Conceptos de Restaurante; Trabajar en la Industria de Servicios

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the last couple of decades, the food and beverage sector's aims have improved, mostly thanks to advances in the twenty-first century. These aims, although mainly focused on customer-centric sales and marketing, also bring forth the prioritization of consumers' preferences, needs, and demands. Thus, changes in the exploitation of foodstuff produce an increased emphasis on perceived value, new approaches to hospitality, new tendencies, and new strategies (Blanck, 2008).

Consequently, overall, there are increases in efforts to search for what is new and better. Apart from these aspects, it also inspires new trends in design and equipment, and changes the organizational form of the restaurant space (Stipanuk, 2006). These developments contribute to the embracing of new design ideas, concepts, and themes in the food and beverage sector. As the industry evolves, maximizing efficiency for both customers and restaurant staff, minimizing security issues, and optimizing the venue in these respects have become essential (Park, 2015).

The crucial point here is the necessity for businesses to understand their customers' needs in an industry with numerous different consumer segments, where the number of these segments continues to grow, as new trends and demands emerge. Horng (2013) notes that restaurant customers require new types of atmosphere and dining area design. Therefore, creativity becomes more critical than ever for the success and survival of restaurants in an extremely competitive market.

However, are the new designs, concepts, and arrangements created in restaurants only of interest to customers? Chang et al. (2011) demonstrate that creative restaurant concepts also enhance financial performance from an employee perspective. Research shows that well-designed environments make employees feel happy and energetic, while poorly-designed environments have the opposite effect (Hoff & Öberg, 2015; Samani & Rasid, 2014).

This can be evaluated in two ways. Firstly, it can be associated with the comfort and convenience provided by a well-designed work environment. Environmental satisfaction arises in environments where individuals feel their expectations and basic needs are met. Additionally, it has been shown that the physical aspects of employees' work environments affect their job satisfaction, as well as performance and other outcomes.

Overall, employee performance, work-related behaviors, job and environmental satisfaction, motivation, and well-being at work will be influenced by how well they feel they fit into the work environment. Therefore, it provides a fundamental element for enhanced job performance. The second is associated with completely changing the way of doing business in the workplace, and indicates a complex process.

The limited available evidence suggests that some behavioral changes occur in restaurant design independently of changes in physical conditions (Graham, et al. 2020; Graham, 2020; Kim & Cho, 2015). Horng (2013) states that creative new designs of spaces stimulate

creativity in employees. At this point, certain considerations come to the fore when formulating plans for creative restaurant design.

Firstly, restaurants with attractive aesthetic features directly affect employees. Measuring creativity in a multi-dimensional and interactive restaurant space constitutes the most critical aspect of design. This is because it requires evaluating the user's interactive experience and focusing on the interface function with the restaurant area appropriate to individual restaurant styles. Therefore, the relationship between employees and customers can be considered as directly related to restaurant design.

These results can create significant variables both in improving the physical environment of restaurant designs and in their sensory dimensions. While the consequences of improving physical conditions are more clearly understood, the effects of new restaurant concepts on employee performance, creativity, motivation, and other factors have not yet been fully understood.

In this study, we examine the open kitchen concept in restaurant design. The open kitchen concept is a highly popular design in contemporary restaurant management. There are many points whereby the open kitchen can add value to a restaurant (Parnley, 2010). This is because open kitchens, unlike traditional restaurant designs, can create an impressive modern atmosphere through which customers can observe the food preparation process and interact with the chefs. In open kitchen design, the kitchen area is visible to customers as a transparent and orderly environment.

Customers can observe and interact with chefs and other kitchen staff. The open kitchen is usually located at the center of the restaurant and provides customers with a wide field of view. Compliance with hygiene standards and a clean environment are highlighted. In open kitchen design, a flexible working space is created for chefs and other kitchen staff. Consequently, open kitchen restaurant design aims to provide customers with the opportunity to observe and interact with the food preparation process, while focusing on factors such as aesthetics, hygiene, organization, and functionality, to provide an overall balanced experience.

Studies evaluating the potential of open kitchens to add motivation and entertainment for consumers as a trend have been considered in the literature in the marketing and tourism contexts. However, research from the perspective of employees, such as chefs, focusing on their work motivation, thus showcasing their knowledge and skills, and turning their work into a performance, is quite limited.

This study aims to make sense of the experiences, work motivation, and satisfaction of chefs working in open kitchen concept restaurants in Turkey, as well as factors such as creativity and taste differentiation in the dishes they prepare, attention to kitchen hygiene and sanitation, and their implementation. In this regard, the research question is defined as "What changes occur in the experiences of chefs working in open kitchens compared to those working in closed kitchens?"

To achieve this goal, the following objectives were identified for the study. Observing the changes in their processes by comparing their experiences when working in

closed kitchens with starting to work in open kitchens. Examining the relationships between customers and kitchen staff. Examining the relationships among the kitchen staff themselves. Analyzing the impact of open kitchens that receive positive evaluations on chefs' professional satisfaction and motivation, in light of the results obtained.

## 2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

It can be said that the advantage and driving force of open kitchen restaurants is that customers interact directly with the employees, and therefore it is relatively easy to create a fun environment (Sohn & Lee, 2018). In this respect, the importance, knowledge, and skill of the chef come to the fore. Chen, Peng, and Hung (2015) reveal important data on this interaction in their study on the effects of chef image on customers.

It has been seen in the study that the cooking process that the chefs specialize in, the open kitchen demonstrations and their communication with the customer in an attempt to provide better service, strongly affect the consumers' experiences, and thus, help to create the image of the chef (Lin & Lin, 2006). In their study, Rollings and Wells (2017) investigated the effectiveness of the open and closed kitchen concepts on the eating behavior of consumers, and they showed that the products served in the open kitchen were consumed to a greater extent, and the demand for the food increased.

In addition, open kitchens represent transparency in terms of production. Restaurants with open kitchens, where some or all the food preparation, cooking and/or serving activities are exposed to the customer, allow consumers to monitor clean and hygienic food processing during their dining experience. Byun & Jang (2018), in their study on whether open or closed kitchen designs affect service errors in customers' perceptions, found that customers are more forgiving over errors in open kitchen restaurants, and they seem to think that the source of the problem does not stem from the kitchen.

The findings of the study show that the open kitchen creates a positive perception of food hygiene and food quality. Customers embrace the belief that restaurants with open kitchens will be cleaner than restaurants with closed kitchens (Chow, Alonso, & Douglas, 2010; Anwar & Jan, 2018; Park, 2015;). Therefore, in addition to the interaction and "entertainment" stemming from the chef, the positive effects on customers' perceptions of food safety and hygiene lead to positive results.

Chuang et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of recognition in the intrinsic motivation of chefs. Although Valk and Yousif (2023) do not focus specifically on chefs, their study in the hospitality industry highlights success, recognition, and responsibility as fundamental motivational factors. Cooper et al. (2017) underline the importance of discipline and organizational structure in creating a strong professional identity for chefs. They also note that a lack of recognition is a significant factor in job dissatisfaction, which can lead to a challenging work environment. Recognition is considered a crucial element in forming a chef's identity.

Various social media and television programs have popularized the phenomenon of celebrity chefs in societies. This trend has not only led to the emergence of famous chefs but has also contributed to gaining professional prestige (Giousmpasoglou, 2020). Chefs have quickly become popular in the public eye due to their culinary skills and personalities (Hou et al., 2022).

Vu et al. (2023) highlight that recognition, along with a sense of pride and passion for the profession, is prominent in chefs' career perceptions. This emerging public perception suggests the potential for chefs to rise and become phenomena. Recognition can be considered the source of this motivation. However, qualitative research on how and why this process occurs remains significantly insufficient.

Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) approached the restaurant experience from a different perspective. Restaurants are seen as a stage, with customers acting as both performers and audience members. The interactions customers have with other people and staff shape the experience. The act of chefs preparing meals is also a part of the theatre restaurant concept.

Chefs play a crucial role in the preparation of the meals served to customers, and this process is one of the elements that form the theatre restaurant experience. Customers encounter meals that reflect the chefs' creativity and skills, thus experiencing this concept. Additionally, in some restaurants, chefs prepare certain dishes at the table, offering customers an interactive and unique experience.

The creativity and skill of the chefs significantly influence the overall atmosphere of the restaurant and the customer experience. Just like a famous actor, the chef has now become part of the "theatre." However, for Gibbs and Ritchie, the lead role belongs to the customers themselves. Graham (2020) argues that it is the chefs, not the customers, who are in the lead role. According to him, chefs act as the main performers in the theatre experience, taking center stage.

In the open kitchen concept, chefs prepare meals in front of customers and present this process as a performance. This gives customers the opportunity to watch the cooking stages and observe the chef's skills. Thus, by acting like lead performers in the open or theatre kitchen experience, chefs showcase their cooking performance to customers and contribute to the restaurant's atmosphere and customer experience.

Graham, Ali, and Tajeddini (2020) emphasize that chefs in open kitchens should go beyond just cooking and develop customer relations. To meet operational expectations and customer observations, a theatrical process of appropriate staging and communication emerges. According to Chae (2008), open kitchens provide chefs with the opportunity to directly showcase their creativity and skills. Working in front of customers allows chefs to express themselves and demonstrate their mastery in the cooking process.

By working in open kitchens, chefs have the opportunity to directly observe customer preferences and reactions. This situation provides motivation and excitement for chefs. Customers watching the live cooking process gives chefs a greater sense of responsibility and a desire to perform their tasks more meticulously.

Graham, Ali, and Tajeddini (2020) emphasize the importance of chefs experiencing customer praise and appreciation of their work firsthand. They highlight that

working in an open kitchen empirically enhances chefs' work motivation positively. Buell, Tsay, and Kim (2014) noted that chefs cook faster and produce more delicious food in front of customers. Although the process of cooking and creativity in a closed environment is acceptable for chefs, it suggests that exposing the preparation and serving process of food could have positive aspects.

Graham, Ali, and Tajeddini (2020) observed that the transformative power of guests is quite significant in the process of chefs working in an open kitchen. Consequently, the behavior, relationships among chefs, and their physical appearance have positively changed. Sohn and Lee (2018) found that chefs' interaction with customers improves their communication skills and positively contributes to the perceived service quality by customers.

There is limited research on the open kitchen system in restaurants. However, these limited studies empirically show that it increases chefs' work motivation. Nevertheless, the reasons and mechanisms behind this process have not been investigated. This study aims to understand the impact of the open kitchen on work motivation and to comprehend its underlying dimensions.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Certain themes have been identified in studies on motivation while working in an open kitchen. These themes can be summarized by the following questions:

1. What emotions are felt when working in an open kitchen?
2. What are the visible effects of cooking in the kitchen?
3. How do chefs interact with customers?
4. How does communication occur among the chefs?

In this study, we aim to revisit and deepen this limitedly researched topic by establishing new connections. These questions were semi-structured and asked to chefs.

Qualitative inductive thematic analysis was used for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes were created based on the responses, and then clustered around higher-level themes (Gill, 2014). Our aim was to delve deeper, so as to identify themes and establish the relationships between them, to interpret the phenomenon. This process is iterative in nature.

During and after the analysis, some codes were revoked and re-evaluated, data segments were recoded, and some were assigned to a different theme deemed more appropriate than the initially assigned one. The output of the research process is a narrative account where the researchers' analytical interpretations are presented alongside direct quotations from the participants (Filimonau & Sulyok, 2021).

It is used to assess the responses expressed by the informants and identified by the researcher. Notes were transcribed to facilitate comparison and then cross-checked for accuracy and reliability. This facilitated the categorization of interview statements into themes, allowing for the creation of a meaningful understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences, while supporting the presentation of quotations and substantiating emerging concepts (Nowell et al., 2017). Finally, the research findings were compared with the existing literature.

## 4 RESULTS ANALYSIS

The chefs' comments regarding motivation, job satisfaction and customer relations regarding their work in the open kitchen are presented in the subheadings below.

### 4.1 Emotions Perceived While Working in an Open Kitchen

The majority of the kitchen chefs express positive emotions about working in an open kitchen. The majority report experiencing a sense of "feeling valued, belonging, being motivated to work, and feeling satisfied," respectively. Participant 2 states, "... Since starting to work in an open kitchen, I've realized how important my job is. Even though not constantly, there's always an eye watching us. I've realized the importance of what I do."

Understanding the reasons behind the chefs feeling valued is important. Participant six states, "When working in a closed kitchen, nobody sees what you do. ... Still, the meal is made by the 'chef.' But who is this chef? Nobody knows. However, when working in an open kitchen, everyone is aware that you're there, making food for them.

That's why I feel very valuable." From this, it can be inferred that chefs not only desire recognition for their cooking but also personally. Participant 12 states, "When I worked in a closed kitchen, only the person who cooked well could define himself. ... I only felt that I belonged to the kitchen. But now I can establish a relationship with the restaurant; I feel like I belong here." The statements of chefs indeed transition them from being "unknown individuals" to showcasing their skills in front of everyone.

Chea (2008) mentions that working in an open kitchen builds self-esteem in chefs, which is consistent with our findings. Additionally, Kim and Cho (2015) in their study on the emotional job satisfaction of chefs working in open kitchens, found that chefs experience positive emotions. Chefs feel valued, happy, and comfortable in an open kitchen environment.

### 4.2 Effects of Interaction with Customers on the Cooking Process

Working in a kitchen where everyone can see them encourages chefs to be more careful, to put more emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene, and to work more meticulously. Participant 1 expressed it as follows: "When working in a closed kitchen, of course, we pay attention to cleanliness. We make sure our clothes are clean. But there are sometimes unimportant things that are overlooked. However, in an open kitchen, these are unforgivable.

If customers become disgusted with the kitchen, they leave the meal uneaten and never come back. That's why we are very, very clean and careful. We select employees accordingly." Noone (2008) suggests in their study that increased customer control in a restaurant has a positive effect on performance evaluations. It can be said that chefs paying attention to the cleanliness of their clothes yields positive results, consistent with a study in the literature.

Wang and Lang (2009) state that the aesthetic quality of staff clothing enhances both pleasant interactions and

customer-staff connections. They have made statements that interaction with customers increases job motivation and loyalty. Working in a cleaner and more meticulous way, valuing creative elements, and cooking delicious meals can all be associated with commitment to work.

Additionally, factors such as self-confidence and creativity can enhance interaction. It is also observed that cooking more delicious meals, working meticulously, and highlighting performance elements lead to high customer satisfaction. Numkung and Jang (2008) express the fact that a well-designed restaurant, competent staff, delicious food, and attractive presentation create high satisfaction.

The chefs stated that they were more confident while working in a cleaner environment and working more meticulously. Participant 5 said, "Most customers come there to have fun, relax, and have a nice time. They prefer to do this by eating, listening to music. So, we put on a little show while cooking. Especially when I'm working on the grill, I make a stir-fry at a high temperature. When flames rise suddenly, it catches the attention of customers."

Kim, Leong and Lee (2005) state that customer orientation partially increases job satisfaction, and directly affects organizational commitment positively. Participant 7 stated, "I am very familiar with the customers because I work in a small business. Some of them come all the time. Sometimes I let them try new things or I serve the same dish differently. Both they and I like it."

Teng and Chang (2013) have shown that the relationship between food quality and emotional responses increases with the degree of hospitality of the employees. Proper communication between customers and employees in restaurants can increase customer loyalty, generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and create loyalty (Hsu, Hsiao, & Tsai, 2018; Nguyen, Ferraro, & Sands, 2020).

#### 4.3 Customers' Approach to Chefs

The responses from chefs regarding customer behaviors indicate a common perception that customers are curious and eager to learn. The environment or atmosphere can create certain emotional effects for consumers, positively influencing their purchase intentions. Participant 3 stated, "Some customers are very curious about cooking. Especially those sitting at tables where they can see the kitchen, they constantly watch us.

Some come and stand to watch us. In such cases, the section chef talks to them. They usually ask for recipes, watch how we work." Creative use of physical spaces can result in marketing successes, with positively perceived quality and attitudes toward dining experiences (Jin et al., 2015). The responses to questions directed at chefs indicate that customers generally view the open kitchen concept favorably.

In particular, it is expressed by chefs that customers who have a special interest in cuisine and food tend to sit closer to the kitchen area. Customers perceive the open kitchen in terms of: entertainment elements being at the forefront, and inspecting hygiene and kitchen quality out of curiosity to learn about new dishes and recipes. Wu and Liang (2009) state that consumers interacting more intimately with employees has a direct positive impact on satisfaction.

Donovan, Brown and Mowen (2004) found that customer focus had a stronger positive effect on certain job responses, especially in employees who interacted directly with customers and spent more time with them. Therefore, this situation implies an increase in perceived quality. These findings seem consistent with the literature.

The cooking process that customers watch with admiration and curiosity reveals another connection. A vast majority of the chefs mention the fact that customers also conduct their own inspections. Participant 23 stated, "When we cook, customers always have their eyes on the kitchen. It may be out of curiosity, but they want to make sure that a clean and safe meal is being prepared."

Indeed, food safety is as important to customers as taste. Participant 22 stated, "We have quite a few loyal customers. I don't think it's just because we make good food. They are sure we comply with hygiene standards, and they appreciate that." Especially with new consumer trends, attention is paid to food safety (Liu & Lee, 2018). In this regard, an open kitchen has an important advantage in terms of assurance.

#### 4.4. Interpersonal Communication Among Employees

The results indicate that chefs work more attentively, meticulously and calmly in open kitchens. Additionally, it is noted that the common use of profanity and vulgar language among kitchen staff, which is quite prevalent in kitchens, ceases in such situations. Participant 19 stated, "In the classic kitchen setup, shouting at and cursing lower-ranking employees, getting angry is considered very normal.

Chefs claim that it's part of the nature of the job. I absolutely disagree. When working in an open kitchen, since everyone can hear you, these negative behaviors disappear. This provides a cleaner and profanity-free environment." Indeed, the existence of professional bullying in kitchens is well-known, which significantly lowers work motivation and can lead to resignations (Murray-Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007; Bourdain, 2013).

Participant 8 mentioned, "When working in a closed kitchen, there is no one there except the chefs. This provides us with a comfortable working environment. Since we are constantly together, sometimes there can be excessive pranks and cursing. An open kitchen is an environment that cuts all of these off like a knife. Everyone suddenly becomes polite, quiet. Without exaggeration, everyone starts to focus on their own work."

Furthermore, the exposure of female employees to such situations is an even more destructive issue (Cairns, Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Therefore, beneficial kitchen organization seems to need a working environment free from bullying and harassment, where chefs can express their creativity (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). Participant 9 stated, "I am a female chef. I used to feel very uncomfortable with the shouting, jokes, cursing of men in closed kitchens. None of this exists in an open kitchen. No pranks, no noise. I am very comfortable because of this. Moreover, the patriarchy is fading away."

### 5 DISCUSSION

We do not believe that the increased service quality from the perspective of customers is solely attributed to the visibility of the kitchen. A significant change has been demonstrated in this study, with chefs transitioning to open kitchens. The open kitchen provides chefs with the opportunity to showcase their production skills, the freshness of ingredients, and the cleanliness of the kitchen.

Chefs have now become an important element of the service environment, capable of showcasing all their creativity and skills during the production process, rather than just focusing on producing delicious food. Yeh et al. (2022) examine the effects of the physical environment in restaurants on chefs' creativity. The functionality of the kitchen and knowledge resources influence chefs' perception of the kitchen's adequacy and their creative performance. Spatial affordances also influence social dynamics.

Thus, good kitchen planning and equipment not only contribute to the perceived adequacy of the kitchen but also enhance work performance through efficient kitchen layout. Additionally, Horg et al. (2013) emphasize that a creative kitchen design can increase customer satisfaction, as it will be more appealing and attractive to customers in terms of aesthetics and other visual aspects.

More importantly, a creative kitchen design also effectively enhances chefs' performance. Research indicates that a creative kitchen design (improved physical conditions, abundance of equipment, lighting, kitchen equipment area or layout, and flooring type) significantly affects chefs' work performance (Ali & Salama, 2016).

However, in our study, the positive attitudes of chefs working in open kitchens (Table 1 and Table 2) cannot be explained solely by physically well-designed kitchens. This is because the chefs we interviewed worked in restaurants that had already received Michelin Stars, meaning they offered fine dining menus. Therefore, all the restaurants were likely to have equally well-planned kitchens.

Furthermore, the chefs in our study describe the change they experienced when transitioning from closed kitchens to open kitchens (as shown in Table 1), and they also mention that they had previously worked in high-end restaurants before working at their current restaurants. Consequently, the most significant factor in the change of attitudes among the chefs was the change in the location of the kitchen. Our chefs started to feel more creative, satisfied, and valuable when they began working in a location visible to customers. We suggest that there is an explanation for these effects through a customer focus.

The service quality perceived by customers is sometimes directly influenced by the interaction between the service provider and the customer. Therefore, service providers who directly interact with customers not only represent the organization but also directly affect customer satisfaction. In this regard, the emotional expression and emotion management of service providers, such as restaurant and hotel staff, should be recognized as important components of customer satisfaction. Additionally, an individual's emotional state can negatively affect the organization and lead to behaviors such as rudeness toward customers and job dissatisfaction.

Kim et al. (2024) suggest that customer orientation among kitchen staff could be a factor contributing to increased job satisfaction. Similarly, Lee (2013) indicates that chefs working in Korean-style show kitchens experience enhanced job satisfaction and performance. Employees with high levels of customer orientation may demonstrate higher performance and a more positive approach to work, compared to those with lower levels (Gazzoli et al., 2012).

Moreover, Donovan et al. (2004) demonstrate that customer orientation has a stronger positive effect on certain job responses for service employees who spend more time directly interacting with customers than those who spend less time. However, some studies have found negative consequences of customer orientation (Gassmann et al., 2010; Blut et al., 2020). In our study, no negative findings were encountered.

Employees with a high level of customer orientation appear to understand their tasks well and, as a result, reduce task stress, role conflict, and uncertainty, contributing to employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a significant variable that measures chefs' positive emotional states. Thus, employees with high job satisfaction will be more likely to be sensitive in their relationships with others, and will be able to quickly understand and respond to customer needs and requests, by listening to customers and displaying a courteous attitude.

Chefs' job satisfaction directly affects customer service. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to provide better customer service. In this context, this study defines customer orientation as a trend toward meeting customer needs, linking it to open kitchen design, and this demonstrates that the job satisfaction of open kitchen employees has a significant impact on customer orientation. (linking it to open kitchen design This seems a bit of a tenuous conclusion. Perhaps you could explain the linkage more clearly. Editor)

Observations show that both customers and chefs in open kitchens are more tolerant of service errors. Changes in perception of potential hygiene issues due to service errors may also be influenced by whether the restaurant is designed with an open or closed kitchen. Customers are more tolerant of meals prepared in open kitchens (Byun & Jang, 2018). Indeed, open kitchen cooking areas provide a guarantee for customers.

The careful behavior and clean working practices exhibited by chefs in our findings create a significant perception of cleanliness among customers. These study results demonstrate the compatibility of customer trust with restaurant transparency. Agrawal & Mittal (2019) emphasize that transparency in restaurants is highly effective in creating customer satisfaction and trust, highlighting the sub-dimensions of transparency in such dimensions as open kitchen design, separate kitchen islands for different diets, transparent pricing, and full display of food products to customers.

Buell et al. (2017) demonstrate that transparency not only improves customer perceptions but also enhances efficiency and service quality, by allowing both the customers to observe the production processes and the employees to observe the customers. Customers' appreciation of employees' efforts leads to a greater sense of value

attributed to the employees, making them feel more appreciated and effective in their work, thus leading to increased job satisfaction and willingness to work.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that by focusing on transparency factors, assurance and reliability can be significantly increased, which in turn affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, it can be said that customers exhibit more positive behaviors toward an apparently controllable cooking process. However, this is not sufficient to explain customers' interest in the cooking process.

Giousmpasoglou et al. (2020) indicate that there has been a significant increase in interest in chefs in societies over the past 20 years. Starting with cooking and food programs on television, chefs have begun to showcase themselves in a wide range of areas, as media personalities, authors, and entrepreneurs. The concept of "celebrity chef" is no longer foreign to any society. Interest in chefs and cooking has not only changed eating and drinking patterns, but has also elevated food consumption to a hedonistic level (Powell & Prasad, 2010).

Consequently, people are highly interested in the cooking process, and follow certain chefs devotedly. In this regard, can a chef cooking on television or social media be considered separately from a chef cooking in an open area in a restaurant? (Hou et al., 2022; Henderson, 2011; Abbots, 2015). Academic studies show that in restaurants where chefs are in the forefront of the operation, customers consume with experiential, entertainment, and pleasure-seeking intentions.

As a result, Tables 2 and 3 are compatible with each other. The pleasure derived from a favorite chef's cooking for customers translates into the impact of an open kitchen on chefs, who prepare meals knowing all about this popularity. We demonstrate the consequences of chefs transitioning from the secluded working environment of closed kitchens to an open space. Chefs are now not only showcasing their dishes but also themselves, ushering in a new era that completely transforms every aspect of cooking.

They are becoming the focal point of the restaurant, not just individuals cooking meals. This recognition bears a striking resemblance to the notion of "celebrity chefs," a term used to describe a small minority who gain fame through television programs, social media, or books, potentially reaching a global audience (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2020). Leschziner (2015) emphasizes that celebrity chefs not only generate interest in the food and beverage sector but also elevate the social status of cooking.

Van Krieken (2018) associates celebrity with attention-grabbing, high visibility, and status-generating qualities. Chefs are becoming attention-grabbing figures who utilize visual elements, add a theatrical element to cooking, and showcase their uniqueness, thus becoming objects of interest in their own right. Graham (2020) refers to this as "theatre of the kitchen." Our proposition is that the influence and power observed in celebrity chefs are also applicable to chefs working in open kitchens.

Like chefs cooking on television or social media, chefs in open kitchens follow a similar cooking process. While celebrity chefs may have a global audience, chefs in open kitchens can be observed by those actually present in the restaurant. Despite having a smaller audience, chefs in

restaurants are beginning to become popular and recognized figures in their own right.

Many chefs may not be aware of this minor celebrity status, but they do notice the consequences it brings, such as recognition, viewership, enthusiasm for work, and influence. The increased interest in the food and beverage industry, and the visibility of chefs in the public eye, have added status and value to the profession. Secondly, now that chefs have found opportunities to showcase themselves, they may become more dedicated to their profession, take on greater responsibility for the meals they produce, and embody their "celebrity" status in the restaurant where they work.

This situation also fosters positive behaviors such as willingly accepting the natural stress and pressure in the kitchen, and improving their own behaviors. Theoretically, our suggestion is to expand the definition of "celebrity chef" to include open kitchen chefs, who create their own popularity in quality restaurants, even if it may not be on a global scale.

Working conditions constitute another dimension of working in the kitchen. Working in the kitchen is inherently stressful, and interpersonal bullying is common in such an environment. Academic studies have addressed the tensions among kitchen staff from various perspectives. The primary dimension is aggression and bullying. Bullying in kitchens can involve both direct and indirect aggression. Harming or belittling someone can occur either through sudden bursts of anger, or regularly.

This can manifest itself in verbal harassment, as well as physical attacks. Such behavior is so widespread among chefs that it is normalized within the profession. Chefs justify this normalization by citing the need to prepare good meals and maintain discipline. This process is associated with a male-dominated kitchen structure. Tunca and Pekerşen (2023) have found that female chefs working in kitchen units face various physical and psychological challenges such as sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and mobbing.

Research on topics like gender inequality commonly indicates that women experience professional bullying and harassment (Cano, 2019). Indeed, it is considered normal for women to be seen as "not belonging" in the kitchen (Albors Garrigos et al., 2020). Furthermore, this process is not limited to women but also applies to inexperienced chefs and interns entering the profession (Lin et al., 2023).

Ram (2018) reports that the kitchen is a "high-risk sector" in terms of bullying and victimization. It is believed to be a reflection of the highly physical and stressful nature of the job undertaken by chefs. Burrow et al. (2022), in their study on poor behaviors in kitchens, have uncovered significant findings. Researchers indicate that chefs feel isolated and physically disconnected from the outside world. According to them, closed kitchens trigger feelings of separation.

Despite this being contrary to the law, their research shows that poor behaviors in kitchens persist due to the isolated nature of the kitchen environment. Few studies investigating behaviors such as bullying, harassment, and mobbing in kitchens have explored the location of the kitchen. Relationships were examined without specifically defining an open kitchen. This suggests that most studies were conducted in traditional kitchen structures with closed kitchens.

We suggest that the location of the kitchen, as pointed out by Burrow, significantly influences behaviors. Our findings indicate that while chefs are aware of the presence of poor behaviors in kitchens, they do not indicate that these occur when they work in the open kitchens. On the contrary, indications suggest that such behaviors have ceased. In conclusion, our findings indicate that poor behaviors experienced in traditional kitchens do not occur in open kitchens. This has also caught the attention of researchers studying open kitchens, such as Graham et al. (2020) and Alonso & O'Neill (2010). Our results are similar.

The failure to meet minimum working conditions in chef satisfaction indicates a low likelihood of chefs being satisfied with their lives (Leung & Lin, 2022; Cerasa et al., 2020). These findings respond to their lives and professional expectations. This logic concerns culinary professionals for two reasons: unstable and uncomfortable physical working conditions in kitchens (high temperatures, noise from machines, and other sounds), and chefs often being exposed to high physical and psychological demands (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018).

The organizational structure and tasks in complex kitchens strongly require teamwork for efficient operation. Good teamwork can help ensure that guest meal orders are served on time. Food processing requires speed and timeliness, for the serving of fresh food in front of guests. Chen et al. (2016) indicate that communication with customers positively influences kitchen experiences.

Mahfud et al. (2017) state that communication skills are the top priority when working in food and beverage production (in kitchens). A study by Sohn and Lee (2018) on the impact of chefs' non-verbal communication on service quality in open kitchens has shown that chefs' non-verbal communication, including non-verbal, kinetic, proxemic, and the effect of physical appearance, is associated with service quality.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This study has tried to make clear the changes in work motivation, job satisfaction and professional development of chefs who have experience of working in a closed kitchen, when they start working in an open kitchen. The concept of the open kitchen restaurant was generally evaluated from a customer perspective and positive results were obtained. The results of this study show that the working conditions of the chefs in the open kitchen are positive. These results have been confirmed, despite the insufficiency of previous studies in the literature.

The chefs described the open kitchen as a spacious environment. This spacious environment makes them feel happiness and excitement. In addition, it was stated that the chefs felt valued, because they were not restricted as in a closed environment, and they felt that they were doing an important job. It can be said that this is an element that increases their motivation in that they feel appreciated. Increasing motivation also affects the business processes. It can be said that the chefs not only work with cleanliness in mind and act carefully when cooking in front of customers, but they also make much more delicious meals, and are remarkable in giving importance to the elements of their performance as being a "show".

Chefs' positive attitude while working is also welcomed from the customers' perspective. The popularity of the gastronomy field and new entertainment concepts have greatly increased people's interest in cuisine. According to the statements of the cooks, the customers are not only happy to eat their food but also to follow its production process. Restaurant customers are curious about the cooking process in the kitchen, and try to learn how it is done. In addition, according to the statements of the chefs, the customers who are interested in the food get seated close to the kitchen. This interesting situation greatly increases the motivation of the chefs at work. This close interest of the customers also puts pressure on the chefs, and it is stated that a control mechanism has been created, inevitably.

The open kitchen directly affects the communication of the chefs among themselves. It is stated in the literature and in the interviews that the cooks who are alone in the closed kitchen environment may engage in negative behaviors such as joking, using slang and swearing, giving orders aggressively, and shouting among themselves. It is seen that the seriousness of working in front of customers in the open kitchen has helped put an end to all of these negative behaviors. In addition, the avoidance of jokes, slang, and cursing improves the working conditions of female chefs and trainee cooks and provides for a more comfortable environment.

This study has achieved its objectives in line with the identified aims. We had the opportunity to thoroughly examine chefs' working conditions and emotions in open kitchens. While the results parallel previous studies on open kitchens, we also encountered some differences. Firstly, in the process that led us to the concept of celebrity chefs, we demonstrated the significant impact of chefs' desire for recognition on motivation.

Additionally, unlike in studies conducted on food and beverage establishments, we did not encounter situations such as mobbing, interpersonal tension among employees, or tension among customers. This suggests that the general perception of kitchens as "chaotic" may be lost in open kitchens. As a result, chefs work in open kitchens with high job satisfaction and high motivation. T

his situation increases their commitment to their work and enables them to prepare dishes in a cleaner way, with more delicious results. In addition, the open kitchen provides an environment where chefs can develop themselves professionally and morally and become better qualified. This positive picture is underscored by the approaches of the customers. It is therefore recommended that new restaurants and businesses create a design with an open kitchen concept.

### 6.1 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

This study has several limitations inherent in its structure. The chefs interviewed for this study are from restaurants that have been awarded Michelin stars, indicating that they are already creative, experienced, and professionally successful individuals. The operations of a high-quality restaurant may not be the same as those of an average restaurant. Another limitation is related to the methodology used.



In this study, we only interviewed experienced kitchen chef managers. Although other kitchen staff were present during our interviews, data were not collected from them, as they were outside the focus group. Additionally, while our interviews provided in-depth insights, they were limited in terms of numerical data. Finally, there were few female chefs among those interviewed. While this may be due to the numerical scarcity of women in the profession, the researchers did not specifically seek out female chefs.

The experience of the open kitchen is not limited to high-quality restaurants. In future studies, the job satisfaction of chefs working in small establishments such as mid-range restaurants, buffets, and even as street vendors can be investigated within the same framework. This can also provide an opportunity to compare them with those in high-quality restaurants.

This study was conducted based on qualitative research principles. In-depth interviews contributed to an understanding of chefs' perceptions of open kitchens, but collecting data from a larger sample size through quantitative survey methods could provide additional insights. Comparisons can be made between different types of chefs, of varying ages, experience and genders. Finally, turning the focus onto women working in open kitchens and onto novice chefs in a separate study may enhance the literature.

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REVIEWING OPEN KITCHEN CONCEPT REGARDING ITS EFFECT ON MOTIVATION OF CHEFS  
İsmet Kutay Sırıklı & Yılmaz Seçim

Participant Coding	Gender	Age	Job Role in the Kitchen	Open Kitchen Experience	Total Work Experience
K1	M	27	Chef de Partie	4	6
K2	M	26	Chef de Partie	3	5
K3	M	32	Sous Chef	5	8
K4	M	30	Sous Chef	4	7
K5	F	34	Sous Chef	3	9
K6	M	28	Chef de Partie	3	8
K7	M	28	Chef de Partie	4	6
K8	M	34	Head Chef	6	11
K9	M	31	Head Chef	5	13
K10	M	21	Chef de Partie	3	5
K11	F	26	Chef de Partie	3	6
K12	M	24	Chef de Partie	4	6
K13	M	30	Sous Chef	5	9
K14	F	29	Sous Chef	6	10
K15	M	23	Chef de Partie	3	5
K16	M	43	Head Chef	8	20
K17	M	26	Chef de Partie	4	8
K18	M	30	Sous Chef	5	9
K19	F	22	Chef de Partie	3	5
K20	F	46	Head Chef	8	19
K21	M	24	Chef de Partie	3	6
K22	M	29	Chef de Partie	4	8
K23	F	26	Sous Chef	3	7
K24	M	29	Sous Chef	4	7
K25	M	26	Chef de Partie	3	5

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Chefs  
Source: own elaboration.

**CRedit author statement**

Term	Definition	Author 1	A2
Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims	X	
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models	X	
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components	X	X
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs		X
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data	X	
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection	X	
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools	X	X
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse	X	X
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)	X	X
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages	X	X
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation	X	
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team	X	
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution	X	
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication		

Source: reproduced from Elsevier (2022, s/p), based upon Brand et al. (2015).

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