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## **Sustainable culinary tourism and Cevicherías: A stakeholder and social practice approach**

### **Abstract**

This study proposes a theoretical framework based on stakeholder and social practice theory in the context of sustainable culinary tourism development. This framework emanates from the examination of issues affecting such development, and ways to adapt, from the perspective of a key SCT stakeholder group, restaurant operators, in a developing gastronomic destination. In-depth, face-to-face interviews revealed socioeconomic and environmental issues, namely, perceived impacts from larger fish/seafood exports, over-fishing, and weather patterns affecting the quantity and consistency of product supply, which resulted in increased prices. Ethical and proactive principles, and taking the leadership in limiting socioeconomic and environmental issues were the main ways to adapt. Moreover, operators were incorporating alternative fish/seafood products, reinforcing ethical conduct, rejecting unacceptable business practices, and strictly adhering to closed seasons/bans. Participants' ways to adapt are strongly related to the tenets of the two employed theories; these associations will be discussed, and future research streams suggested.

**Keywords:** Stakeholder theory, social practice theory, sustainable culinary tourism, restaurant operators, Peru

### **Introduction**

Culinary tourism (CT) is becoming an important subject area (Kim, Yuan, Goh, & Antun, 2009), and its development is increasingly documented (e.g., du Rand & Heath, 2006; Long, 2013; Spilková & Fialová, 2013; Stewart, Bramble, & Ziraldo, 2008). Food comprises a key element in travellers' decision to choose a particular destination (Kim et al., 2009) and arguably, is partly the result of growing interest in food heritage and local foods (Hjalager and Johansen, 2013).

Among various definitions, Long (2013) conceptualises CT in terms of food being a medium, a vehicle and a destination for tourism. Moreover, CT is about people satisfying curiosity, and "groups using food to "sell" their histories", as well as to create publicly attractive and marketable identities (Long, 2013). Essentially, CT underlines unique dishes and foods "from the culture of the host region" (Green & Dougherty, 2008, p. 158).

Despite the growing CT research, knowledge gaps have been revealed in the academic literature. For example, Green and Dougherty (2008) posit that research focusing on motivations for buying local foods is inadequate. In addition, while a link between gastronomy and tourism is supported in the literature, there is a dearth of knowledge concerning its value in non-traditional versus traditional regions (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010).

An emerging body of knowledge also underscores the significance of sustainable culinary tourism (SCT) in contributing to the competitiveness or promotion of regions (e.g., du Rand and Heath, 2006; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2013), or to community development (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014). Furthermore, there has been a pervasive trend for sustainability and environmental friendliness influencing already established food practices (Sidali, Kastenholz, & Bianchi, 2015). In a joint report by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Tourism Organisation (UNEP and WTO, 2005) sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that is accountable for its future and current environmental,

economic, and social impacts, as well as tourism that addresses environmental, host community, visitor, or industry needs. Hence, SCT relates to how gastronomy, represented by its main stakeholders, the restaurant and food production industries (e.g., agriculture, fishing), takes into account the above impacts to address the needs of other stakeholders, including their own sector, consumers, or the environment.

Aligned with this notion, Montanari and Staniscia (2009) assert that the association between agriculture and tourism has proven “to be an economic lever...” (p. 1463), contributing to sustainable development through the protection of territories that are at risk, or fragile. Sims (2009) explains the powerful symbolism of food and place, in that offering travellers ways to experience authentic foods can lead to developing sustainable tourism in various ways. Indeed, by referring to the work of Ilbery, Kneafsey, Bowler, and Clark (2003), Sims (2009) affirms that promoting iconic foods can create images for particular destinations, which in turn attracts visitors and boosts economic sustainability.

As with the broad CT discourse, the body of SCT research is still under development. A literature review by Everett and Aitchison (2008) identifies a knowledge gap concerning the linkages between food, sustainability, identity and tourism. In addition, du Rand and Heath (2006) indicate that there is little international attention placed upon the contribution of food to the marketing of destinations and, more importantly, to sustainable tourism.

Thus, the present study is concerned with the links between food and sustainability in the context of a developing CT destination. In focusing on this area, the study will contribute to the academic literature. First, the study seeks to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How is CT’s sustainability challenged in the studied CT destination?

RQ2: How can a SCT product be developed? In other words, what adaptation strategies/activities contribute to SCT development?

To address these questions, the perspectives of restaurant operators will be gathered. As Presenza and Del Chiappa (2013) mention, there is limited research investigating restaurant operators’ attitude toward the marketing of local foods, or their use to emphasise the competitiveness, and promote the local identity of destinations.

Second, the study makes a theoretical contribution, proposing a framework (Figure 1) derived from two theories considered in the context of SCT, namely, stakeholder and social practice theory. Consequently, the framework shall emerge from addressing the following question:

RQ3: To what extent do the proposed theories help explain SCT development?

Given its direct associations with the adopted theories, RQ3 will be addressed in the discussion section.

## **Literature Review**

### *Theoretical background*

In line with contemporary research (e.g., Kline, Knollenberg, & Deale, 2014), this investigation first adopts stakeholder theory (e.g., Freeman, 1994) as a tool to generate understanding of the impact and the importance of the study’s key group of stakeholders, restaurateurs. Therefore, the study makes a contribution, both in identifying stakeholders’ perceived issues pertaining to SCT development (RQ1), as well as in implementing ways to address these challenges (RQ2).

Despite ST's importance in gaining "multiple perspectives on stakeholder salience" (Currie, Seaton, & Wesley, 2009, p. 58), limited attention has been paid to examine questions concerning the meaning of creating value for stakeholders or how such value can be measured (Harrison & Wicks, 2013).

According to Freeman (2004), the notion of stakeholders relates to values and ethics. Based on this premise, a fundamental question of enterprise strategy is to learn how firms can positively influence stakeholders and what managers do in that regard (Freeman, 2004). Definitions of stakeholders can be broad (Freeman, 2004), and serve different purposes (Parmar et al., 2010). In organisational settings, one definition identifies stakeholders as employees, suppliers, customers, communities, or groups on which firms depend upon to exist (Dunham, Freeman & Liedtka, 2006). Another definition, adopted by this study, refers to stakeholders as individuals or groups affected by or that can affect the achievements of corporations' purposes (Freeman, 2004).

Stakeholder theory (ST) provides a lens to consider more complex perspectives "of the value that stakeholders seek as well as new ways to measure it" (Harrison & Wicks, 2013, p. 97). Fundamentally, ST is expressed in two questions, one that asks about the purpose of the firm, and the second the responsibility of management toward its stakeholders (Freeman, 1994; Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004).

Donaldson and Preston's (1995) earlier work proposed four theses that represent the foundation of ST:

- 1) The *descriptive/empirical* thesis proposes a paradigm, which describes a corporation in terms of competitive and cooperative interests with intrinsic value (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The descriptive thesis is associated with research making accurate assertions about what companies and managers actually do (Parmar et al., 2010). In the context of tourism development, the descriptive/empirical thesis can help describe policies and procedures associated with the management and development of tourism, and links between organisations and agencies involved in this industry (Byrd, 2007).
- 2) The *instrumental thesis* examines the links between corporations' achievement of different performance objectives, and their practice of stakeholder management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Parmar et al. (2010) relate this thesis to research that examines the outcomes of a particular managerial behaviour. Importantly, the thesis suggests links between specific actions and end results, as would be in the case of increased hotel room inventory, revenue generation, and taxes collected through the development of a new hotel (Byrd, 2007).
- 3) The *normative thesis* is linked to ways in which firms should be run, and how managers should act (Freeman, 1994); it also encompasses research that essentially 'asks' what corporations or managers should do (Parmar et al., 2010). Furthermore, this thesis represents ST's central basis, and includes the acceptance of two fundamental ideas (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The first idea is that stakeholders are groups or people with genuine interests in substantive/procedural facets of company activity; the second, that stakeholders' interests have intrinsic value (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).
- 4) The *managerial* thesis involves research that states "the needs of practitioners" (Parmar et al., 2010, p. 410), and emphasises that ST goes beyond the simple description of existing situations, or predictions of cause-effect relations (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Moreover, the theory recommends structures, practices and attitudes that represent stakeholder management, and requires synchronised attention to the interests of stakeholders. This attention includes the considerations placed upon decision making, general policies, and in establishing organisational structures (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

A study discussing culinary tourism strategic development (Horng & Tsai, 2012) highlights various aspects associated with the above theses, particularly the normative and

managerial. Indeed, in referring to earlier research (e.g., Smith and Xiao, 2008), Horng and Tsai (2012), and more recently Everett and Slocum (2013), emphasise the role of culinary tourism resources. In accord with the discourses of Freeman (1994), Parmar et al. (2010), and Donaldson and Preston (1995), these resources underscore the value of strategic ways to run a firm, managers' behaviour, consideration to the needs of practitioners, and practices and structures representing stakeholder management. Moreover, related to the present study, and based on Smith and Xiao's (2008) contribution, those resources encompass activities (dining at restaurants), education and observation (reading food and beverage magazines), and buildings and structures (restaurants). The provision of these resources strongly require the active involvement of the organisation or product and service providers.

The present study's focus on "more sustainable patterns of consumption" (Hargreaves, 2011, p. 84), or perceived ways in which participants are contributing to CT's sustainability, also underscores the value of applying social practice theory (SPT) in addressing RQ1 and RQ2. In the field of tourism, the application of practice theories, while increasingly considered (Lamers, van der Duim, & Spaargaren, 2017) is still limited (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2015). Thus, by adopting SPT, the study further contributes to addressing another gap in the literature.

Hargreaves (2011) acknowledges earlier seminal research (e.g., Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1984; Reckwitz, 2002; Shove, 2010, Shove & Pantzar, 2005) that helped develop SPT. For instance, Reckwitz (2002) conceptualised a practice as "a routinized type of behaviour" (p. 249) consisting of various elements that were all interconnected, including states of emotion, know how, and motivational knowledge. Lazarus (1991) explains that 'motivational' refers to "reactions to the status of goals in everyday adaptational encounters" (p. 820), and are displayed through acute moods or emotions. Knowledge, on the other hand, entails generalised and situational principles "about how things work" (Lazarus, 1991, p. 820).

A practice can be illustrated in such forms as ways of consuming, investigating, working, and taking care of people (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices denote patterns that can be complemented by numerous, often unique and single actions (Reckwitz, 2002). As mental or bodily agents, individuals are carriers of practices that need coordination (Reckwitz, 2002). Thus, apart from "patterns of bodily behaviour" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250), individuals also become carriers of routinized ways of knowing how, desiring and understanding (Reckwitz, 2002).

According to Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012), theories of practice exhibit unexplored potential to understand change. Rather than focusing on individuals' choices, behaviours, or attitudes, SPT emphasises how practices are created, maintained, reproduced, challenged, stabilised, and eventually killed off (Hargreaves, 2011). Furthermore, SPT focuses on how such practices draw experts, who then seek to strengthen or maintain these practices through continuous performance or even embrace other, more sustainable ones (Hargreaves, 2011).

Therefore, SPT proposes a different interpretation of efforts among civil society groups to create sustainability transitions (Hargreaves, Haxeltine, Longhurst, & Syfang, 2011). As opposed to developing new niches or challenging existing regimes, civil society can be understood as various attempts to become involved "in the dynamics of practice" (Hargreaves et al., 2011, p. 9). In acknowledging Gram-Hanssen's (2010) work, Hargreaves et al. (2011) illustrate this notion. They refer to consumer 'buycotts' and boycotts, movements intended to instil change to routine practices, and to awareness-raising campaigns, which are perceived as attempts to incorporate new images into current practices. In turn, Shove et al. (2012) explain that "practices exist as performances" (p. 7), and that 'by doing' interdependencies can be sustained.

Concerning the present research, an investigation conducted among small seasonal restaurants applied practice theories (Wellton, Jonsson, Walter, & Svingstedt, 2016). The research considered three elements (knowledge/competence, creation/meaning, and technologies/materiality) to understand and identify configurations of activities associated with daily work. Wellton et al.'s (2016) study revealed various salient practices, for instance, managing seasons and time, controlling, strategizing, and planning, and implementing skills and knowledge.

In employing various tenets of both ST and SPT, this study proposes a framework (Figure 1) that brings together restaurant operators and SCT development, and depicts various relationships in regards to adaptation. First, the descriptive and normative theses relate to action, practice and routinized behaviour. Second, the managerial thesis has links with care for others, and with maintaining, and strengthening practices that in the present study represent sustainable practices. Third, the suggested implications underscore value creation for different stakeholders, including resident consumers, international visitors, and overall, for the development of a SCT product. Fourth, the cycle invariably starts again with restaurant operators, as the key providers of SCT experiences. The proposed framework is therefore a useful complement to the present investigation, which is based on case study research. According to Yin (1999), in this type of research it is important to develop a framework to describe the questions and topics that will be covered, and the theme to be studied.

Overall, the present study makes an important theoretical contribution, proposing a framework to test both ST and SPT empirically in the context of SCT in an emerging culinary destination.

Figure 1 Here

#### *The geographic setting of the study - Peru*

The South American nation of Peru, where the study was conducted, has a population of 38.4 million inhabitants, and one of the continent's fastest economic growth rates, nearly six percent (World Bank, 2016). While the export of mining products overwhelmingly represents its largest source of revenues, approximately \$US 25 billion (INEI, National Institute of Informatics and Statistics, 2017), Peru's tourism industry is experiencing growth, and becoming an important socioeconomic driver.

In 2014, travel and tourism in Peru represented 3.6 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, or nearly \$US 7.6 billion (World Travel and Tourism Council, WTTC, 2015); this figure included revenues produced through transportation services, hotels, travel agencies and restaurants and leisure. According to the WTTC (2015), Peru's travel and tourism is set to grow at a consistent annual rate of 6.2 percent until 2025, when its contribution will almost double (\$US15 billion). Increasingly, and importantly in the context of the present study, Peru's cuisine is gaining international reputation (Nelson, 2016; Richardson, 2015).

#### **Methods**

Fundamentally, this research makes a theoretical contribution, proposing a framework in the context of SCT development, based on stakeholder and social practice philosophies. The study is concerned with a) how the sustainability of CT is challenged in an emerging culinary destination, and b) what adaptive strategies are being implemented to develop a SCT product from the perspective of restaurant operators. The study therefore addresses various knowledge gaps, with a key focus upon the links between food and sustainable tourism (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; du Rand & Heath, 2006).

By involving restaurant operators, the research narrows another knowledge gap identified by Presenza and Del Chiappa (2013). Compared with other stakeholders, such as fisheries or suppliers, restaurateurs play a key role in the provision of CT experiences. Moreover, their service is clearly “most closely associated with culinary tourism” (Presenza & Del Chiappa, 2013, p. 183). Given their significance, and accord with Presenza and Del Chiappa (2013) restaurateurs were the preferred stakeholder group in this study. At the same time, the insights gathered in the study provide a theoretical and empirical foundation to guide future investigations into this sector. Similarly, it extends the focus to examine other stakeholder groups, including suppliers, fisheries, or consumers.

This research employs a constructivist and an inductive approach, which is also aligned with previous tourism research (e.g., Gehrels, 2013; Yang & Chan, 2010). Constructivism is related to how individuals build knowledge (Jonassen, 1991), and a way or philosophy to view the world (Wilson, 1997). Indeed, individuals construct or interpret a reality based on their ‘apperceptions’, and how they construct knowledge is founded on prior beliefs, experiences and mental structures that they use to interpret events or objects (Jonassen, 1991). Constructivists believe that one has to interpret the world of meaning in order to understand it (Schwandt, 1994).

Inductive analysis is a method based on “detailed readings of raw data” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238) to develop themes. The inductive approach provides a simple means to derive “findings in the context of focused evaluation questions” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Furthermore, the main objective of inductive approaches is allow the emergence of research findings from significant, dominant, or frequent themes in raw data (Thomas, 2006).

This research also employs a case study research methodology, which emphasises on understanding dynamics “within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). Furthermore, case studies represent empirical enquiries thoroughly investigating contemporary phenomena within real life contexts, particularly when the boundary between context and phenomenon is not clearly apparent (Yin, 2009). In case study research, ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are asked concerning contemporary sets of events, over which investigators have limited or no control (Yin, 2009). In this research, Lima’s restaurant sector (Cevicherías) illustrates the phenomenon under examination, while the individual restaurateurs can be considered as the ‘single settings’. Essentially, case studies include interviews, questionnaires, and observations as data collection methods (Eisenhardt, 1989), and can help in developing theory (Dooley, 2002; Eisenhardt, 1989 & Graebner, 2007).

A review of the pertinent CT literature (e.g., Horng & Tsai, 2012; Ilbery et al., 2003; Montanari & Staniscia, 2009; Sims, 2009; Smith & Xiao, 2008) contributed to a deeper understanding of SCT, the central theme of this research, and to the design of the first two research questions.

One fundamental decision to choose Lima, Peru, for this research is based on the growing popularity of this city as a culinary destination (e.g., Nelson, 2016; Richardson, 2015). The size of this city, with approximately 10 million inhabitants (United Nations, 2016) was also perceived as significant, providing opportunities to examine the potential of CT in the numerous existing hospitality firms. Initially, a search in various websites identified a list of Lima’s most popular Cevicherías, or restaurants specialising in one of Peru’s signature dishes, Ceviche, which consists of seafood or fish marinated in lime juice (Nelson, 2016). The cultural and gastronomic significance of Cevicherías for Peru (Albala, 2011; Nash, 1994) as providers of Ceviche and other fish and seafood-based dishes was a fundamental reason to choose this group of businesses in the present research. Furthermore, the selection of this group aligns with the study’s focus on sustainable culinary tourism, in particular marine resources.

As many as 10 Cevicherías located in the district/neighbourhood of Miraflores were identified. These businesses, all of which offered Ceviche and other popular Peruvian fish and seafood dishes, are frequented by various consumers segments, including tourists, government and embassy employees. The identified Cevicherías were contacted by the research team through email correspondence, in which the objectives of the study were outlined, and a formal invitation was made to their owners and/or managers to take part in the study.

After receiving a positive response from seven of the 10 contacted businesses, the owners and managers of these operations were met and interviewed face-to-face in December of 2016 by one of the authors, who is fluent in Spanish. The interview protocol first entailed questions pertaining to participants' professional background, which were followed by others to address RQ1 and RQ2. For instance, regarding RQ1, participants were asked:

To what extent is the development of a SCT product challenged, for instance, to further elevate Lima as a culinary destination? Specifically, what are the most pressing challenges?

To address RQ2, the following questions were asked:

How can a SCT product be developed, for instance, in the context of Lima? Specifically, what strategies are needed to facilitate SCT development?

During these interviews, five participants made suggestions for the researcher to meet with other Cevichería operators, both nearby and in other neighbourhoods. This form of snowball sampling (e.g., Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002) allowed for contacting another nine restaurants, with seven of them participating in the research. Therefore, in all, 14 restaurant operators participated. The on-site conducted interviews lasted 75 minutes on average and were recorded with each participant's consent.

In addition, while on-site, the researcher had the opportunity to conduct observations, take field notes, and, in some cases, read printed material of the operation (e.g., brochures, newspaper articles, books). After the interviews were completed, information pertaining to the Cevicherías, as well as about Peru's fishery industry and the country's growing gastronomic phenomenon was also inspected. For instance, the websites of the participating firms, those of international tourism organisations (e.g., World Travel Organisation), YouTube videos, and news on gastronomy were accessed. According to Decrop (1999), these forms of incorporating various data sources are part of data triangulation.

In agreement with Bowen (2009), triangulation assisted the research team in addressing two potential issues: researcher/respondent bias and trustworthiness. Another issue compromising the results of qualitative research, selection bias, can occur during the identification process of the population to be studied, particularly, using different criteria in the recruitment process of study cohorts (Pannucci and Wilkins, 2010). To counter this issue, similar recruitment procedures were followed when contacting and informing business operators of the study's objectives.

Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) explain that valid inquiry should "demonstrate its true value, provide the basis for applying it, and allow for external judgments to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings or decisions" (p. 29). To ensure trustworthiness in gathering data, Graneheim and Lundman (2004) suggest the measures of credibility, transferability and dependability. These measures were addressed by implementing several recommended provisions (e.g., Decrop, 2004; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004).



To address credibility, prolonged engagement, observations, peers' scrutiny of the research, and examination of previous findings, for instance, in comparing the findings of later interviews with previous ones, were employed. Concerning transferability, 'thick description' was used, particularly through the description of relationships in the findings identified during the interviews. With regard to dependability, the research design utilised in the present study included the preparation of the research team's daily reflexive journal, or 'audit trail' (Erlandson et al., 1993) containing details of how the research was executed.

Although the number of interviews in this study is limited in comparison to the numerous existing Cevicherías in Lima, data saturation was reached by the 13<sup>th</sup> interview, and was further affirmed by the 14<sup>th</sup>. At this point, no new issues were emergent. The notion of saturation is supported by earlier research (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006), which suggests that this outcome may occur within the initial 12 interviews. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and crosschecked by the three members of the research team for accuracy, consistency and clarity. Subsequently, qualitative content analysis was employed. This research method consists of subjectively interpreting "content of text data" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278), and is based on a systematic process of classification, which includes identifying patterns and themes. All members of the research team were also involved in this process, which, again, allowed for cross-checking the consistency of the identified themes and response patterns.

Content analysis was supported by NVivo (version 10), a data management software; in this study, NVivo assisted in the clustering of nodes by word similarity (Tables 2, 3).

#### *Demographic information of participants and restaurants*

As illustrated (Table 1), all the restaurants in this study are micro and small in size. Arbulú (2006) explains that, based on Peruvian legislation, micro businesses employ 10 or fewer people, and small businesses up to 50. Most participants were male (78.6%) and owners of the restaurants (64.3%). On average, participants had nearly 16 years of working experience in the restaurant sector, with P1, one of Peru's most prominent international culinary figures, having worked for more than four decades. Another key figure of Peru's food and beverage sector, P4, owned various restaurants and is currently Peru's leading authority in Pisco, a beverage that has gained significant popularity, particularly in the area of cocktails (e.g., Pisco sour). Similarly, P7 grew up and worked for nearly 40 years in his family's restaurant, one of the first Cevicherías in the Miraflores neighbourhood/district. The majority of the participating Cevicherías (10) were located in Miraflores.

Table 1 Here

## **Findings**

### *RQ1: How SCT is challenged*

Participants were first queried about existing barriers that may be preventing the sustainable development of CT. The qualitative content analysis (Table 2) identified several socioeconomic-environmental issues, as well as political. As the figures and the nodes clustered by word similarity illustrate (Table 2), most of these issues were interrelated, with socioeconomic-environmental (clusters 1, 2) being more predominant. First, there was a strong view of price rises of fish and seafood due to the perceived increase in fish/seafood exports, a phenomenon that grew due to more demand in international markets, and the opportunity for Peru to earn much-needed revenues (P8): "*Fish/seafood exports represents a huge market and brings hard currency to the country.*"

According to Swartz, Sumaila, Watson and Pauly (2010), Japan, a significant marine fish export destination, is one of Peru's major trading partners, albeit predominantly importing fish meals. However, fish meals, as well as fish oil, are primarily based on landings of the 'anchoveta' species, and Peru is a top exporter of these products (Freón et al., 2014). Further concerning the impact of fish/seafood exports, there were strong views associating shortages in the domestic market and increased prices:

*P2: Definitely, there are smaller volumes of fish and seafood. For instance, not long ago you could be 8 dozen mussels with 10 Soles; now, one dozen costs 12 Soles... there is less volume, mussels are smaller, and the price has increased because, apart from greater consumption, there are also many international companies exporting [Peruvian] fish and seafood.*

*P13: We have experienced some issues, not only because there is a shortage of some species, but also, and consequently, because prices have increased substantially.*

Table 2 Here

Similarly, the second socioeconomic-environmental cluster (Table 2) underscores three overlapping issues, a) the difficulties in finding specific species to cater for consumer demand, b) that some species traditional to Peruvian cuisine have become rarer or even extinct in recent decades and years, and c) the challenges of selling farmed fish/seafood. Three different comments highlighted the severity of these issues:

*P7: When we opened this restaurant, one of the best sellers we had on the menu was the 'Macha' [clam]. Unfortunately, this species disappeared completely...*

*P10: We have had problems sourcing silverside, mussels of the right size, and we have had problems with the day's menu fish, which sometimes does not arrive [not delivered due to lack of stock].*

*P9: In Peru, people do not particularly like farmed seafood/fish: it is still stigmatised as being of lower quality.*

The third cluster, which mainly refers to socioeconomic and environmental problems, also overlapped with politically related ones. For example, as the following comments underline, there were critical views regarding overfishing, unethical behaviour among various food stakeholders, including the fishing industry, as well as lack of firmness from government agencies in implementing strict fishing bans or closed seasons for some species:

*P1: There is a lot of depredation, and fish is being over caught.*

*P2: Our signature dish is Ceviche and it is fundamentally a product of the sea; however, there is an incongruence because, although our marine appetite is very voracious, there is no marine culture.*

*P11: [Many] fishermen do not respect fishing bans, or the minimum size of the fish they are allowed to catch.*

Earlier research (Hornig & Tsai, 2012; Smith and Xiao, 2008) identifies various key success factors in CT strategic development, including creating an educational environment where both tourism and a culinary culture can be nurtured, and effectively employing culinary resources. The comments above illustrate that, unless such resources are properly

managed and more awareness is raised regarding predatory practices and lack of marine culture, the consequences could be far-reaching. Moreover, the issues presented and illustrated in Table 2 have clear implications for participants' Cevicherías, as their revenues primarily originate from the sale of fish and seafood dishes. In addition, the issues have implications for other key stakeholders, such as consumers, or tourists travelling to experience the nation's cuisine. Along these lines, P6 mentioned the need to modify the composition of dishes due to lack of supply of mainstream fish/seafood products, which had direct repercussions on restaurant patrons' perceptions:

*If you are used to working primarily with one kind of fish and you cannot acquire it, you are forced to make changes and you have to use various types of fish, which inevitably have different flavours... You can of course make Ceviche with many fish varieties, but not all the fish is of the same quality and flavour.*

#### *RQ2: How a SCT product can be developed*

The results of Table 3 show that over three-fourths of participants were considering alternative fish/seafood products to replace or recreate dishes that employed species that either were unavailable or subject to closed seasons. At the same time, creativity emerged in light of supply issues, in that operators and their kitchen staff were maximising the availability of other types of fish/seafood available in larger supply to continue offering traditional dishes. Different verbatim comments further denoted a strongly proactive attitude and interest to adapt to the various challenges affecting the potential of SCT:

*P7: ...we are incorporating other fish species. People only think they can eat flounder or croaker... but we need to get used to eat what the sea has available every day.*

*P13: We try very hard not to become too dependent on one species, because having steady supply of flounder or sea bass is not realistic. We have to be creative, find new species, and see how they can be useful, prepared, and presented to the public, and overall, serving a fresh, quality product.*

Part of the comments above overlap with the content of the second cluster of the findings (Table 3), which highlights participants' involvement in taking a leadership role and in strengthening self-consciousness and awareness. One illustration of these key elements was presented by P2, a veteran scuba diver and underwater fisher, who exercised self-critique, and explained his contribution in raising more awareness of marine life issues, and in educating society: *"It is true that we [in Peru] are leaders in gastronomy, but we are not leaders in taking care of nature. I have decided to focus on education about the sea. I have written a book; I give talks, I present, and try to educate people."* This comment strongly aligns with Smith and Xiao's (2008) point, where they highlight the value of the educational component in developing CT effectively.

In another case (P10), the operator's intent to find alternatives to limited fish/seafood supplies and higher prices risked confusing consumers and compromising the image of the restaurant:

*P10: We have incorporated more meats in our dishes. For instance, in our day's menu, which is limited in number... we only have fish one day (Mondays)... this change offers more alternatives to our customers. However, we are known as a*

*Cevichería, and people visit us to try Ceviche, for our seafood dishes, which are our specialty, and 80 percent of our sales...*

Table 3 Here

Six participants also indicated that some Lima restaurants were experimenting with fresh water fish from the Amazon region (e.g., Paiche) as an alternative to counter shortages and high prices of sea fish. With regard to experimentation, and despite the stigmatisation among some consumers, four participants were also using farmed seafood products. In one case, even farmed products sometimes were in short supply, forcing operators to look even further, internationally, which entailed making financial sacrifices (P10): *“We often source prawns from local farms... but now with the stock drawing to a close... we are going to end up paying more [for alternative products], but we will have to do it.”* The participant also acknowledged that, to not alienate patrons, the increased costs could not be passed on to these.

The second part of the qualitative content analysis, namely, the resulting nodes (Table 3) revealed three main clusters, 1) ethical, 2) proactive principles and initiatives, and 3) taking a leadership role, responding to the challenges of SCT development, and being conscious of these challenges. The content of these clusters overlaps, and at the same time suggests, a variety of ways to adapt. With regard to ethical principles, P1’s case is particularly insightful. As a leading and pioneering figure of Peru’s gastronomy, and with a wealth of experience as a restaurateur, this participant was very critical of the current management of the nation’s sea and fishing by different stakeholders: *“I find it a crime to prepare Ceviche with small or baby flounders.”* P1’s strong ethical principles also led to finding ways to address existing sustainability related problems: *In the 1990s, we created a restaurant association... and around 30 of us started working very hard to build a gastronomic foundation... This work led to new regulations, and to more awareness.*

Partly supporting these comments, other participants acknowledged that, to some extent, the fishing bans and closed seasons were starting to take effect. Indeed, these measures were creating a sense of urgency to act, and a stronger level of awareness concerning the future sustainability of marine life. As P8 acknowledged, *“The closing seasons started at the same time as the increase in exports and the restaurant boom; otherwise, the sea would be depredated, and it would be ‘good-bye’ for us.”* Similarly, P14 was strongly in favour of the enforcement of regulatory bans, and underscored the need for self-restraint (e.g., within the fishing industry, restaurateurs), and proactiveness to adapt in light of the gravity of supply issues: *“We have seasonal bans... so that a species has time to recuperate in numbers. For example, we have closed seasons for mangrove cockles and prawns; we use farmed prawns.”*

As with P14, the case of P13 demonstrates commitment beyond fundamental organisational principles and objectives. One strategy (P13) involved working with the Sea Institute of Peru to identify the different seasonal fishing bans ahead of time. This strategy allowed the participant and the operation to plan alternative courses of action, including in terms of product purchasing. Regarding this point, Everett and Slocum (2013) argue that, in order to attain sustainable benefits from food tourism, policies need to help cultivate a cooperative environment among different industries that have different motivations, challenges, or needs. Everett and Slocum (2013) explain that cooperation could take the form of improved policy engagement, which appears to fit in the case of the present research.

Another important aspect, raised in earlier research (Hunter, 2002), refers to the need for ecological footprint analysis, which could help to improve knowledge regarding the demands of tourism activity on the environment. Complementing Everett and Slocum’s (2013)

research, ecological footprint analysis could shed light on impacts of various types of tourism, inform decision makers, or even provide the foundation for critical and routine assessments of such impacts (Hunter, 2002). With regard to this study, ecological footprint analysis appears to be undertaken primarily through individual initiatives, including those by P13's organisation. Indeed, while this participant's restaurant heavily traded with an affluent and highly demanding domestic and international clientele, the following observations demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable practices:

*Sometimes we buy a new fish, take pictures, send them to this Institute, and they help us identify the species... We also enforce our own seasonal bans. For instance, sea urchins have a certain period to release their eggs; if you catch them during this time, they will be unable to reproduce."*

While individual efforts could inspire the growth of a movement among restaurateurs to counter over-fishing, over-consumption, and other threats, they are only part of the foundation to address SCT issues. Furthermore, for these initiatives to be taken further and make a visible impact on the long-term sustainability of fish and seafood supplies, a more comprehensive approach has to be implemented. Partly in agreement with P2's views, a study discussing factors affecting lobster and crab species worldwide (Petrossian, Weis, & Pires, 2015) underscores the significance of educating both restaurateurs and consumers about marine species at risk. Another important step reflected in various comments (e.g., P1, P7, P10) would be to incentivise or even require restaurateurs to design 'sustainable menus' and use these to inform patrons (Petrossian et al., 2015), further contributing to educational processes.

Although seemingly obvious, effective educational initiatives, as well as the planning and execution of strategies to curb overfishing and depredation, also demand the strong support of institutional/government representatives, or even international organisations. The combined efforts from stakeholders operating at fishery, restaurant, and government level should raise awareness of current pressures on certain marine species. In turn, growing awareness can help inform these and other stakeholders, such as consumers, to reject certain fishing practices, including the sale of small/baby fish and seafood, an issue raised by P1.

Clearly, there are barriers in implementing such campaigns successfully. One fundamental difficulty is the monitoring and auditing of these campaigns to guarantee their effectiveness, especially given the socioeconomic importance of the fisheries sector for Peru's economy. Indeed, nationwide, this sector provides employment to 232,000 individuals, and 35 percent of the jobs are in restaurants (Christensen et al., 2014). Unsurprisingly, the pressing needs of many fishing operators to fish and sell marine products to restaurateurs, and the needs of many restaurateurs to safeguard their business could potentially lead to opportunistic and unethical behaviour.

Nevertheless, and as all participants acknowledged at some point during the interviews, if no serious efforts are undertaken, there could be irreversible medium and long-term impacts for food and service providers, and consequently, for the further development of Peru's CT. This argument is supported by the reflections of P2: *"In various seas, marine species are dying out, and no one is doing anything about it; it is business as usual. However, if there is no change in attitude, then nature itself is going to reciprocate this careless attitude."*

## Discussion

### *RQ3: How the proposed theories help explain SCT development*

Overall, the proposed ideology, validated in the findings, represents a helpful and supportive tool that encourages more rigorous reflections. Moreover, the ideology facilitates a deeper understanding of the significance of a key stakeholder group, restaurant operators, their practices, role, commitment and potential impact on other stakeholders. Complementing the framework (Figure 1), Table 4 identifies various associations between the three research questions, various theses and tenets of the adopted theories, and selected comments participants provided. The discussion of these associations follows in the next paragraphs.

First, regarding the *descriptive/empirical* thesis, the findings demonstrate the importance of restaurateurs, in identifying challenges to SCT development, as well as in being proactive in promoting SCT. This group of stakeholders have clear competitive and financial interests, including the long-term success of their businesses. In turn, these interests heavily depend on the availability of consistent, high-quality marine food resources, thus, underscoring the importance of sustainability. The thesis was also substantiated in the ways in which participants were adapting and contributing to SCT. Moreover, aligned with Parmar et al. (2010), the cases of P13, working closely with a local institute, or self-imposing closed fishing seasons, or that of P1, rejecting unethical fishing and consumption practices, provide further evidence of how participants' firms were operating.

Table 4 Here

The *instrumental* thesis extends from the descriptive/empirical, namely, through the intrinsic value participants sought to achieve, both for their sake and that of other stakeholders. For example, by implementing adaptive measures, by supporting and respecting closed seasons, or by incorporating other products, the participating firms were practicing stakeholder management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Moreover, these measures can lead to such positive outcomes as contributing to the environment (e.g., preservation of marine species), employment, future culinary experiences for consumers, and to drawing visitors to Lima and/or other Peruvian destinations to experience CT. In this context, the findings also provide a meaning and a measurement of value and value creation, which are under-researched in the academic literature (Harrison & Wicks, 2017).

The *normative* thesis was clearly associated with ways in which participants were acting in the face of socioeconomic and environmental challenges. They were focusing on long-term strategies and commitment, which suggests a development of norms and sustainable philosophies that can influence their sector, other industries (fisheries, suppliers), and society. Furthermore, the findings underline a normative principle, which proposes that members of these sectors and industries, as well as government representatives, need to recognise how their actions can affect other groups of stakeholders. Consequently, they must act in constructive ways, avoiding detrimental practices that can have lasting effects on consumers or society. One illustration could be government's strict enforcement of fishing bans, or in instructing fishery personnel, and restaurateurs, of the age/size of fish/seafood to be caught, or purchased, respectively.

For the purposes of this study, the *managerial* thesis, which emphasises practices, structures, and attitudes constituting stakeholder management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) suggests important socioeconomic and environmental implications for SCT development. For example, stakeholder management among proactive and conscious restaurateurs can contribute to protecting marine species, through the design and execution of plans to source

alternative foods. Similarly, the importance of raising the awareness of sustainability and sustainable business practices is reflected.

Complementing and supporting ST's theses, the SPT provides a useful lens to reflect on the importance of practical and routinized ways or types of behaviour (Reckwitz, 2002), in this case, among restaurant operators. Indeed, the conceptualisation of practice (Reckwitz, 2002) was illustrated, including in the interconnections between participants' background knowledge concerning the understanding of current challenges to SCT development, know how, and ways of working. The element of motivational knowledge also was apparent, in participants' different ways of responding to socioeconomic and environmental issues, and consideration of various proactive, long-term related alternatives to adapt. In turn, these alternatives highlight participants' understanding of change (Shove et al., 2012) in its numerous forms, such as carefully sourcing fish/seafood, modifying their menus to incorporate alternative products, and communicating the changes to educate consumers, or even their staff.

This notion is also related to the work of Gram-Hanssen (2010), and Hargreaves et al. (2011). For example, movements aimed at producing change to habitual practices, as well as action-focused measures could enhance the prospects of participants' businesses, that of the fishing industry, and the overall long-term success of SCT. Moreover, the tenets of SPT became apparent in restaurateurs' exhibited motivational knowledge and drive to identify and implement sustainable forms of consumption (Hargreaves, 2011). The cases of P1 and P13, among others, illustrated leadership, in self-imposing closed fishing seasons or in renouncing to such practices as buying species that face over-fishing, or do not fit certain sustainable criteria.

The comments of P2, and those of others (e.g., P1, P10, P14) emphasise the importance of self-consciousness and the need to execute various proactive sustainable actions, which align with Hargreaves et al.'s (2011) principles of dynamics of practice. These dynamics highlight the incorporation of new images into existing ways of operating. Overall, by doing or by subscribing to more socioeconomically and environmentally friendlier sourcing, purchasing, and consumption practices, participants were engaging in those sequential moments of performance (Shove et al., 2012). Overtime, such moments can become conventional or common practice within the participants' restaurant sector. While due to opportunistic behaviour, socioeconomic need, or other reasons many other restaurateurs, or fishermen, may not follow suit, the emergence of a movement that seeks positive change through the adherence of fundamental sustainable practices is a first vital step toward SCT development.

## **Conclusions**

Despite copious CT research, different knowledge gaps, both in the literature and from a theoretical perspective, have been identified (e.g., du Rand & Heath, 2006; Everett & Aitchison, 2008). In addition, to date, a limited number of studies focused on restaurant operators' usage of local foods as a competitive and promotional tool (Presenza & Del Chiappa, 2013). Furthermore, the applicability of practice theories in tourism research is still limited (Rihova et al., 2015). The present research, which focused on challenges to SCT development and ways to adapt to challenges from the perspective of restaurant operators in an emerging CT destination, addressed various existing knowledge gaps.

The proposed ideology (Figure 1), which is based on ST and SPT, was the study's main contribution. This ideology provides a road map to facilitate understanding of adaptation among restaurant operators, a key stakeholder group in the provision of SCT. Notably, the instrumental thesis underscored the element of intrinsic value some participants were enhancing through their proactive actions, such as incorporating alternative products, or by

becoming stricter and more sensible to supply issues, contributing to safeguarding marine life. Similarly, the managerial thesis highlighted the significance of operators' attitudes, practices, and structures (e.g., P13), again, in seeking to create value for other stakeholder groups.

The adoption of SPT complemented the initial understanding provided by ST's theses. For example, P13's structured initiatives, working together with a marine agency, are aligned with the element of routinized behaviour, practices and actions, knowing how, and caring for others. Motivational knowledge, which suggests reactions to situational goals in routine adaptational encounters, and general beliefs concerning how certain processes may work (Lazarus, 1991) was also relevant. Moreover, motivational knowledge was closely related to developing or gaining awareness of more sustainable ways of consumption and sustainable practices (Hargreaves, 2011).

### **Implications**

The findings have very important practical implications, especially for CT destinations that significantly depend on marine resources, as a way of life, as tourist attractions, catering for visitors by providing culinary experiences. Fundamentally, engaging at an individual, restaurant level in environmentally, socially acceptable business practices, and consumption patterns not only represents a symbolic, modest contribution, but also a vehicle to motivate other restaurant operators to follow suit.

Various comments (e.g., P1, P11, P13), and contemporary research (Petrossian et al., 2015) highlight the paramount importance of addressing overfishing, overconsumption, and the lack of stakeholder awareness, including among consumers and restaurateurs. In the case of Peru, some of these concerns are exacerbated by the country's need to earn revenues through fish and seafood exports. Unsurprisingly, more limited product supply and increased prices of fish/seafood products were identified (P2, P6, P7, P10). Continuing the status quo could have serious and damaging consequences for Peru's fish and seafood supply, and seriously hamper efforts to develop a SCT product.

Therefore, despite their symbolism, individual, proactive initiatives could become part of a movement, whereby operators are carriers of routinized forms of understanding and 'knowing how' (Reckwitz, 2002), or ways to grow awareness among members of their sector, consumers, and government. Various comments highlighted a strong commitment in educating consumers/society (P2), in rejecting unsustainable business practices, and forming pressure groups to influence government (P1), or even proactively enforcing closed fishing seasons and working together with institutions (P13). Other participants (P7, P14) engaged in alternative sustainable practices, to add value to consumers while minimising the impact on marine life. Importantly, these actions, or routinized ways (Reckwitz, 2002), alongside sustainable business and consumption practices, can be influential and positively affect the restaurant sector. Similarly, they would also have an effect upon consumers, the fishing industry and government. Together, these actions can contribute to SCT development and to more socioeconomic wealth, for instance, creating employment through more patronage from both domestic and international culinary enthusiasts.

The findings also have key theoretical implications. Essentially, the ideology proposed in this research (Figure 1), strongly complemented by ST and SPT, and by Table 4, offers a structure to reflect on and understand adaptability in the context of SCT. Furthermore, the different ST related theses help guide research concerning the obligations of restaurant operations, other organisations (government) and sectors (fishing industry) towards various stakeholder groups, such as consumers and society in general. In fact, various key aspects of each thesis, including objectives, achievements, and managerial behaviour (instrumental



thesis), or how management should act to create value to stakeholders (normative thesis) can be taken further when investigating SCT firms, or even sustainability in other domains. In addition, the SPT extends from ST, to isolate specific elements related to SCT. For example, the concept of routinized behaviour is significant to understand the need to embrace sustainable practices, and make them part of a firm's philosophy and its culture.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

While in this study data saturation was reached after completing 14 interviews, and participants were very knowledgeable and experienced individuals, the number of interviews is nevertheless limited. Future research could seek to reach more restaurant operators, including new and well established Peruvian star chefs, who are currently developing their entrepreneurial skills.

The study was also restricted to Peru's capital, Lima, which prevents from conducting comparative analyses between restaurants operating in cities, smaller towns and rural regions. Future investigations could examine other Peruvian locations where CT is having significant environmental or socioeconomic impacts. For instance, research could include restaurateurs in Peru's Amazon region, where some participants identified a growing trend of adapting local fish to prepare classic Peruvian dishes. The potential consequences of such practices, particularly in light of increased demands from Peru's growing domestic and international tourism, could also be explored.

Given the importance of Lima as an increasingly popular culinary destination, future research could identify ways in which restaurateurs in this city are continuing to counter existing environmental and overconsumption challenges identified in the present study. In doing so, practical forms to counteract environmental challenges could emerge, and be part of a strategic model for implementation in other culinary destinations facing similar concerns. Furthermore, the investigation of cuisines in other Latin American nations could be helpful, in providing new insights of how CT is developing, again, particularly concerning its socioeconomic and environmental impact, as well as ways to develop a SCT product. Aligned with these future research avenues, and from a theoretical perspective, considering ST and SPT in future research could result in the development of alternative theoretical frameworks to help guide the understanding of restaurant operators' sustainable practices, behaviour, and, overall, of SCT development.

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