POLITÉCNICO DE LEIRIA | ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE TURISMO E TECNOLOGIA DO MAR

Exploring Sustainable Chocolate Ventures:

A Pathway For a Chocolate Shop in Lisbon

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Dedication:

“To Professors Fernanda Oliveira and Sofia Eurico, for their guidance, support, and invaluable encouragement throughout this journey, and to my friend Vítor Batista, for his friendship and steady support.”

Abstract:

As customers give transparency, ethical consumerism top priority in their buying decisions, the chocolate business has been severely affected by the worldwide movement towards sustainable and ethical consumption. Responsible sourcing also matters greatly. Combining important ideas of sustainability, ethical trade, and culinary tourism, this study investigates if it is feasible to open a sustainable chocolate business in Lisbon.

This paper investigates the function of sustainable chocolate in forming consumer behaviour, evaluating business viability, and embedding itself into Lisbon's vibrant gastronomic scene using a theoretical framework and a qualitative research method. The results show how environmentally friendly chocolate companies may support consumer education, urban sustainability, fair trade and ethical cocoa farming.

Even although demand for sustainable chocolate is growing, issues including price sensitivity, market entrance restrictions, and logistical complexity have to be closely controlled. In this industry, a well-organised business strategy can improve profitability and competitiveness by means of consumer involvement, guarantees of transparency, and use of strategic site choices.

By matching corporate models with changing ethical consumer patterns and sustainable tourism trends, this study offers a strategic road map for companies hoping to join the sustainable chocolate industry. Emphasising the possibility to provide social, environmental, and financial advantages in metropolitan settings like Lisbon, this study provides insightful analysis of best practices for retail and sustainable chocolate manufacture.

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Keywords:

Sustainable Chocolate, Ethical Chocolate Retail, Gastronomic Tourism, Conscious Consumerism, Urban Sustainability, Lisbon, Cocoa Production.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Looking at the chocolate production industry, it is important to understand that the worldwide push towards ethical and ecologically friendly practices has resulted in a clear acceleration of the sustainability movement over several industries. This is how this trend, which we believe will show up as a new consciousness in the years to come, is influencing consumers of today to be more aware of the social and environmental consequences of the goods they purchase, so increasing demand for more sustainable and open corporate models. Companies in the chocolate sector are under increasing pressure to adjust to these shifting expectations as a result of this paradigm shift and vision. According to Bello-Bravo et al. *"the increasing consumer demand for sustainable cocoa, with the apparent failure of national governments in addressing the issues in cocoa production, have led to the rise of private certification standards"* (2022, p. 266). Nothing more than a positive reaction to consumer demands and the environmental effects of cocoa farming, the author's requirements have been identified. As a result of this conceptual change toward ethical consumerism, sustainable projects are proliferating across a number of industries, with the chocolate industry emerging as a primary emphasis area.

It is obvious that the junction of gastronomy and sustainability in travel presents fresh prospects for places like Lisbon, where local customs are closely entwined with cuisine. Gastronomic tourism has had to change to support the use of ethically and environmentally friendly goods to provide more rich cultural encounters. In this regard, guests now actively search for restaurants that share their values and give ethical and sustainable production practices first priority. As stated by Dias, Almeida, & Hemsworth *"through food tasting, experiencing, and purchasing, tourists can experience the historical and cultural heritage of destinations, making their consumption more participatory rather than merely contemplative"* (2023, p. 101).

We can thus identify a new dynamic of forces where sustainability and the cultural offer of a tourist destination can benefit each other in a synergistic way, educating the tourist by raising the quality bar of the offer, benefiting all the participants in this experience.

We can also consider that another important dimension that is definitely becoming a key aspect of Lisbon's attraction as a gastronomic destination is its ability to offer unique and authentic culinary experiences to its visitors. Chocolate, known for its exquisite qualities and

cultural significance, can occupy an important position in this scenario. The growing demand in the world for artisanal and ethically sourced chocolate reflects a wider trend towards conscious consumption, particularly among tourists looking to patronise companies that prioritise ethical production methods. As Gish points out: “Ethical consumption occurs when consumers see their purchasing decisions as a way to express some sense of ethical, or perhaps even political, responsibility" (2023, p. 11). In this sense, we can logically understand that this shift in consumer behavior represents an excellent opportunity for the creation of a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon, catering to both local residents and international tourists. The main goal of this project is therefore to examine the viability of setting up a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon combining important ideas from gastronomic tourism, environmental responsibility in the culinary sector, and business strategies based on ethical values of chocolate manufacture. The study also aims to identify and describe the present offer of chocolate stores in Lisbon, with a focus on their market positioning, product distinctiveness, and sustainability practices, thereby supporting this general goal. It also intends to gather primary data on the industry view, especially in relation to knowledge and expectations about ethical sourcing and sustainability. Finally, it will investigate the practical difficulties of using good sustainability practices in a setting where the main raw material cocoa is naturally imported, hence impacting the ecological footprint of a business model aiming to be ecologically responsible. These areas of investigation will enable a critical and realistic awareness of the possibilities and limits connected to opening a sustainable chocolate business in Lisbon.

1.1 Study Themes, Objectives and Structure

This research is divided into two main parts: a theoretical framework and a practical assessment of the feasibility of opening such an establishment in the real world.

After introducing the study in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 presents an exhaustive analysis of the correlation between chocolate, tourism and gastronomy. We next "dive" into the complex historical history of chocolate, illustrating how it evolved from a revered beverage in Mesoamerica to a gourmet treat loved all around. Examining how consumers interact with chocolate as part of a greater gastronomic experience, this chapter investigates the cultural value of chocolate and its inclusion into culinary travel. Thanks to the development of gourmet tourism, more and more visitors are seeking for real local food in order to fully

experience the culture of a location. According to Dias et al: *"As proposed by WTO (2012) food tourists are those who travel in search of the authenticity of places through food and are concerned with the origin of the products"* (2023, p. 102-103). This part of the study also explores how chocolate affects visitors' impression and emphasises its significance in forming their opinions of the authenticity and local way of life.

Proceeding in Chapter 3, the subject of sustainability in the chocolate sector is investigated with particular focus on the challenges and possibilities of using sustainable approaches in cocoa production and chocolate manufacture. It looks at the social, economical, and environmental effects of various approaches and assesses the theoretical bases of sustainability in this domain.

As noted in a recent study: *"Cocoa suppliers rely on market strategies and demands from the chocolate manufacturers trying to satisfy the final customer, but farmers need incentives to follow all certification procedures"* (Bello-Bravo et al., 2022, p. 268). The section also gives particular consideration to how consumers perceive the origin of chocolate and the responsibility of the industry to ensure sustainable practices. In addition, it delves into alternative trade models, such as direct trade and small producer certifications, which have gained popularity in ensuring fair benefits for cocoa producers. Moreover, it stresses the significance of maintaining cultural and social identities through sustainable chocolate production, as well as other measures taken by the industry to promote sustainability.

The following Chapter 4 provides an intricate analysis of the cultural and gastronomic tourism scene in Lisbon, focusing on the integration of a sustainable chocolate shop into this city environment full of potential. This chapter offers a brief summary of the ideas and goals of the shop together with an analysis of consumer behaviour, market trends, and possibilities for the development and spread of this kind of business in Lisbon.

Chapter 5 then goes over the methodological approach employed in this study, which regards qualitative research techniques to evaluate the viability of opening a sustainable chocolate store. This chapter describes the meticulous preparation and execution of the interviews meant to provide understanding of local stakeholders, consumers, and travel agents.

Semi-structured interviews were designed to investigate several points of view and get a complete knowledge of the possibilities and difficulties involved. These revelations fit the body of current research on consumer trends.

As Bravo et al. state: *"Health-conscious consumers are increasingly seeking out products that offer both indulgence and contribute to their overall well-being. In particular, sustainably produced chocolate addresses both of these desires, providing indulgence while maintaining ethical and health standards"* (2022, p. 290). The study of the gathered data will provide us important knowledge regarding the viability of opening a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon and offer suggestions for its effective introduction. Along with strategic suggestions, Chapter 6 evaluates the possibilities, strengths, shortcomings, and hazards of opening a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon using the SWOT analysis procedure. This careful study offers insightful analysis of the possible advantages and difficulties of working in this industry. The thorough study and analysis carried out in previous chapters guide the suggested strategic recommendations.

At last, Chapter 7 offers the concluding remarks of the study. It presents a last overview combining the key thesis results with a thorough study of the viability of opening a profitable chocolate business in Lisbon.

This section merges both theoretical and practical insights obtained during the research, underlining the importance of aligning business strategies with consumer preferences, as well as considering the broader implications for global sustainability efforts in the food industry. These results emphasize the need for businesses to understand the diversity in consumer behaviors and adapt their strategies accordingly. As Janssen asserts: *consumers are by far not a homogeneous group, neither in terms of their general social and environmental values, their level of problem awareness, their attitude towards different sustainability labels, nor their preferences when it comes to specific chocolate attributes"* (2023,p.44).

Furthermore underlined in this part is how a thorough awareness of local culture can improve a company's capacity to interact with its target market and stand out in a crowded industry. Given Lisbon's thriving gastronomic scene, including chocolate into the larger framework of gastronomic travel might present fresh chances for sustainable development.

Companies that can effectively combine sustainability initiatives with cultural relevance could not only help financially but also support social and environmental issues. This all-encompassing strategy can strengthen brand identification and appeal more to consumers driven by ethical issues in their choice of products or services.

Section I. Theoretical Approach

This section provides the conceptual background for the project, addressing key themes such as the cultural significance of chocolate, its role in gastronomic tourism, and the importance of sustainability in the chocolate industry. These topics are essential to understanding how a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon can align with current trends in ethical consumption, tourism, and responsible business practices.

Chapter 2. Chocolate, Tourism, and Gastronomy

Chocolate is special at the junction of travel, history, and culture. From an ancient holy drink in Mesoamerican civilisations to a worldwide consumed commodity, this chapter investigates the development of chocolate. Examining its historical, social, and financial relevance, the conversation emphasises how industrial developments, colonialism, and world trade have moulded and changed chocolate.

Beyond its historical background, modern culinary travel depends much on chocolate. This chapter looks at how chocolate tourism presents immersive experiences that span tradition and modern innovation by combining authenticity, sensory experience, and sustainability. Key component of culinary tourism, chocolate-based travel promotes closer interaction with local cultures by means of trips to cocoa farms, hand-crafted chocolate-making seminars, and tasting events.

Emphasising important ideas like authenticity, co-creation, and multi-sensory involvement, the theoretical underpinnings of culinary and gourmet tourism are also addressed. This chapter shows how chocolate tourism functions as both an economic engine and a means of cultural interaction by referencing cases from many chocolate-producing areas and worldwide gourmet venues. From historical legacies to contemporary experiential travel, this viewpoint helps one to fully appreciate chocolate's influence in tourism.

2.1 The Multifaceted History of Cocoa and Chocolate

Over millennia, cocoa and chocolate have been indispensable in the spiritual, cultural, and commercial life of numerous civilisations for ages. Its evolution from a holy Mesoamerican drink to a worldwide commodity illustrates major historical events including

industrialisation and colonial expansion. Díaz-Valderrama et al. (2020) contend that the development of cocoa exposes more general trends of globalisation and the building of international trade routes. This evolution not only highlights the interconnectedness of economies but also reveals the adaptive nature of cultural practices when exposed to external influences. The path of cocoa's growth provides understanding of how local customs could be modified to satisfy worldwide demand while preserving their cultural value.

Often regarded as the first to domesticate cocoa, a process carried out between 1500 BCE and 400 BCE, the Olmecs are among the first known civilisations in Mesoamerica. Morell-Hart (2020) claims that for the Olmecs, cocoa was not only food but also a vital component in their ceremonial and social events, so reflecting great cultural and spiritual worth. This demonstrates an early understanding of how agricultural products can transcend their utilitarian value to embody deeper symbolic and communal meanings. Archaeological data from sites such as San Lorenzo and La Venta, which reveal early fermentation and use of cocoa drinks, further confirm this integration. These developments cleared the path for later civilisations such as the Aztecs and the Maya to embrace cocoa more completely into their governmental and commercial systems. The Olmecs demonstrated the dynamic interaction of agriculture, belief systems, and society organisation by raising cacao from a subsistence crop to a cultural emblem.

The symbolic value of cocoa in early communities cannot be overstated. The Olmecs' views of divinity and social order were closely entwined with their activities of growing and consuming cocoa. By means of its ceremonial use, cocoa transcended mere agriculture and became ingrained in the spiritual and social fabric of their civilisation. This integration points to a sophisticated recognition of how natural resources could anchor cultural identity. Mesoamerican history continued this respect of cocoa as a holy material, which shaped later civilisations in the area. Such close ties between food, spirituality, and community emphasise how over millennia agricultural methods could transform societal systems. This ongoing relationship implies that food is not only a biological need but also a strong influence in forming cultural practices, hierarchies, and identities.

Rising between 250 and 900 CE, cocoa was seen by the Maya as a divine gift essential for social and religious life. Texts like the Dresden Codex show how often ritual customs highlight the holy origins of cacao. Morell-Hart (2020) notes that cocoa was crucial not only for ceremonial celebrations but also for strengthening social ties by group dining. This dual role underscores how cocoa operated as both a sacred object and a facilitator of community

cohesion. Furthermore, used as money, cocoa proved to be both a spiritual emblem and a financial boon. This legacy still shapes how modern gourmet travel honours Mesoamerica's cultural inheritance. Reflecting a balance between material and spiritual objectives, cocoa's dual status as a cash and a sacred commodity epitribes its adaptability in fulfilling both practical and symbolic purposes in society.

Extending Mayan traditions, the Aztecs incorporated cocoa into their governmental and commercial structures in the 14th and 15th centuries. Moreiras (2010) says that cocoa served as a luxury good and a necessary component of the Aztec tribute system, therefore signifying riches and so supporting state authority. This use of cocoa as tribute highlights its integration into state mechanisms, cementing its role as a tool of political and social control. The emperor Montezuma II reportedly ate a lot of cocoa every day, hence highlighting its reputation as a status symbol. Until the Spanish conquistadors arrived in 1519, which started the path of cacao to Europe, this system of tribute and trade continued. The Aztec example illustrates how commodities like cocoa could be used not only to sustain economies but also to legitimise political power, reinforcing social stratification through material wealth.

A turning point in its history came when cocoa first arrived in Europe during the sixteenth century. Knapp (1920) notes that thanks to royal marriages like that of Anne of Austria, who brought cocoa to the French court in 1615, cocoa started to represent luxury among European nobles. This transition illustrates how cultural artifacts from colonised regions were recontextualised in Europe to reflect sophistication and prestige. Sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon added over time changed cocoa into a sweeter and more pleasant dessert, hence raising its appeal. Chocolate houses in cities like London in the 17th century reflected their growing availability and cultural value all throughout Europe. From a ceremonial ingredient in Mesoamerica, cocoa's evolution into a European luxury good mirrors more general trends of cultural adaptation and economic exploitation. This change of view emphasises how international trade changed the connotations and values connected with agricultural products.

European nations set farms throughout the Caribbean and South America as demand for cocoa rose. Lafargue et al. (2021) stress how repressive this system was, largely reliant on African slaves for labour, thereby included cocoa production under the transatlantic slave trade. This dependence on forced labour draws attention to the sinister roots of early cocoa societies, in which human exploitation drove expansion. By the late eighteenth century, Saint- Domingue now Haiti had become a significant cocoa grower, therefore improving the

French colonial economy. But the Haitian Revolution disrupted this system, so European countries moved cocoa output to West Africa, where countries like Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire became key actors in world trade (Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, 2023). This change underlines the legacy of colonial institutions in forming world trade by showing how often economic resilience entails the redirection of labour and resources, often at considerable human cost. Revolutionary technical advances in the 19th century changed chocolate production. Sloane (2016) mentions as a significant invention the cocoa press invented by Coenraad Johannes van Houten in 1828, which let solid chocolate to be manufactured and cocoa butter to be extracted from solids. Moss and Badenoch (2009) claim that industrial chocolate companies like Cadbury, Lindt, and Hershey first developed during this period and helped chocolate to become generally reasonably priced for the middle class. Together with the milk chocolate creations of Daniel Peter and Henri Nestlé in 1875, these inventions expanded the market by drawing in consumers drawn to sweeter products. These developments highlight how technology innovation may democratise access to luxury goods by reflecting the junction of science, consumer behaviour, and industry. The chocolate business reflected larger society movements towards accessibility and modernity by turning formerly a symbol of luxury into a commonly consumed commodity.

2.2 Chocolate in Gastronomic Tourism: Bridging Theory and Experience

Gastronomic tourism provides tourists with a necessary confluence of cultural history, sensory experience, sustainability, and co-creation, therefore enabling them to establish close and substantial links with the destinations they visit. Defining gastronomy tourism helps one to grasp this dynamic. The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2021) defines gastronomy tourism as "a type of tourism activity characterised by the visitor's experience linked with food and related activities". It covers learning about regional foods, traditional cooking techniques, and the cultural relevance of gastronomy in a certain location. Gastronomic tourism emphasises, as Ellis et al. (2018) stress, giving visitors real and immersive sensory experiences that link them to local cultures.

Emphasising refined and high-quality culinary experiences including exclusive tastings, artisanal workshops, and gourmet meals, gourmet tourism becomes a specialised form of gastronomic tourism within this more general framework. Focussing on chocolate as a cultural artefact and sensory pleasure, a niche within both gastronomy and gourmet tourism,

chocolate tourism shows this interaction. Visiting cocoa farms, taking part in chocolate-making seminars, and sampling handcrafted chocolate goods help to highlight the historical and cultural aspects of chocolate by means of this niche.

Chocolate is special in this context as a cultural artefact as well as a tool for innovation. Through its rich historical, sensory, and social aspects, it symbolises the theoretical foundations of gastronomic and gourmet tourism authenticity, sensuality, sustainability, and co-creation. For example, authenticity is emphasised when visitors learn about the cultural legacy of chocolate in Mesoamerica or participate in traditional cocoa harvesting techniques, so complementing MacCannell's (1973) definition of authenticity as a mix of cultural preservation and significant personal interaction. Chocolate tourism is mostly driven by sensuality, which provides multi-sensory experiences including taste, scent, and texture of good chocolate. Pereira (2024) underlines how sensory tourism events, such blindfolded tasting sessions, boost visitor involvement and produce unforgettable experiences, so increasing As chocolate travel typically stresses ethical production methods and engaging activities like creating chocolate with local artists, so sustainability and co-creation are equally important and help to create a closer link between guests and the location.

Combining technology with interactive experiences and history in chocolate travel not only reflects but also challenges and broadens accepted wisdom on travel. For example, augmented reality tours let guests see historical chocolate manufacturing techniques while interacting with contemporary sustainable practices, therefore fusing invention with legacy (Jung & Tom Dieck, 2017). These encounters show how chocolate tourism can adapt to changing tourist expectations while keeping its origins in authenticity and sustainability, hence strengthening its educational and cultural value.

Still one of the most crucial concepts influencing gastronomic tourism is authenticity. According to MacCannell (1973), authenticity in travel is found in the deliberate blend of planned cultural events and actual local interactions. While early readings of authenticity concentrated on faithfulness to historical and cultural authenticity, recent scholars such Fu (2019) argue that existential authenticity which gives emotional resonance and personal meaning first priority has become ever more vital. Chocolate travel reflects this growing consciousness of authenticity by means of encounters connecting visitors to both modernism and history. For example, planting excursions in Ecuador allow guests to engage in traditional cacao harvesting methods, therefore establishing a physical link to the local

agricultural past (Félix et al., 2024). Likewise in Belgium, handcrafted chocolate workshops allow participants to witness the artistry behind praline-making, a tradition that embodies the country's rich cultural heritage (YouGuide Ltd, 2024). According to Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020), these interactions let modern demands to be satisfied and help guests to cherish regional legacy, thereby balancing preservation and innovation.

Apart from authenticity, sensuality is also significant for chocolate tourism since it offers multi-sensory experiences transcending taste. Guzel & Dortyol (2016) assert that multi-sensory tourism experiences, which engage touch, sight, scent, sound, and taste, are crucial for creating memorable and immersive events. Chocolate is the ideal medium for such activities because of its versatility and different taste impression. Christou (2022) highlights that combining the tactile and gustatory pleasures of Swiss chocolate tastings with the visual grandeur of the Swiss Alps emphasizes the sensory appeal of the Swiss Chocolate Train, thereby tying product to place. High-tech eating events such as Sublimotion in Ibiza highlight even more the sensory creativity of chocolate. Falconer (2020) argues that multi-sensory atmospheres, including non-food factors like sound and aroma, play a critical role in transforming dining into immersive and memorable experiences. Chocolate incorporation into these immersive environments lets gourmet tourism leverage sensory exploration as a powerful tool for emotional and cultural exchange.

The revolutionary concept of co-creation has revolutionised culinary travel by placing visitors as active players instead of passive consumers. According to Martinez-Cañas et al. (2016), co-creation enables local companies, guests, and stakeholders to work together, therefore generating more valuable and important experiences. Chocolate tourism offers several opportunities for co-creation especially via interactive seminars and educational excursions. For example, visitors to the Lindt Home of Chocolate in Zurich can learn about the techniques and background of Swiss chocolate production while simultaneously preparing their own delights under chocolate-making lessons. Planting excursions similarly let guests engage in hands-on cocoa picking and chocolate manufacturing processes in Latin America, therefore directly linking the agricultural source of the good (Porras Laitinen, 2024). These direct interactions enable guests to become more emotionally involved and responsible, therefore deepening their relationships with the local people and their cultural legacy.

Apart from co-creation, the flexibility of chocolate tourism shows its function as a link between changing theoretical ideas and useful implementations. Bonetti et al. (2014) claim

that the junction of cultural legacy and creativity creates an ongoing cycle of experiential learning that not only involves visitors but also helps nearby areas. For example, projects combining immersive technology like augmented reality with storytelling help visitors to better grasp cultural tales and maintain authenticity. As Jiang et al. (2024) emphasises, these participatory events help modern gourmet tourism to remain anchored in cultural and environmental values while nevertheless adjusting to evolving visitor expectations.

Especially in the field of chocolate tourism, this link between creativity and heritage emphasises how constantly gourmet travel is evolving. Often used synonymously with gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism is travel where food and drink take front stage as the primary component of the experience. As Long (1998) underlines, culinary tourism also involves a deeper engagement with cultural identity; gastronomic tourism is "a type of tourism activity characterised by the visitor's experience linked with food and related activities." The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2021) also emphasises this. As a specialist component of culinary tourism, chocolate tourism draws attention to the interaction between cultural legacy and creative experiences like augmented reality tours displaying its history or chocolate-making seminars (Stone et al., 2018).

Situating chocolate tourism inside this framework helps us to see how it bridges theoretical ideas with useful applications. For example, the preservation of historic chocolate-making techniques reflects the authenticity of culinary tourism, while multi-sensory sampling events powerfully convey its sensory features. Park and Widyanta (2022) investigate how sensory experiences such as taste and scent increase visitor involvement and generate lifetime memories. These components show the dynamic and mutually influential interaction between the theoretical roots of culinary tourism and its pragmatic expressions in the field of chocolate together with developments like sustainable production methods and interactive technologies. Concurrently, creative experiences especially those involving co-creation have the power to sharpen and widen these frameworks. Theoretically, gastronomic travel has evolved over time to mirror the complexity and range of gastronomic encounters in different cultural environments. According to Jelinčić (2019), gourmet tourism creates emotional attachments with sites by integrating guests in a process of cultural, historical, and sensory investigation, therefore transcending simple food intake. This multitude of meanings extends both from experiences based in authenticity and local customs to more modern approaches where inventiveness and technology are essential. Still authenticity is among the most often discussed concepts in gourmet travel books. Ellis et al. (2018) underline that authenticity can

be categorised as objective that stresses the preservation of local customs or subjective, concentrated on tourists' emotional resonance and personal experience. This is in line with Smith and Xiao (2008), who argue that existential authenticity helps guests actively interact with their identities by means of participatory and emotionally meaningful contacts. To demonstrate this link in chocolate tourism, hands-on activities including cocoa picking and artisanal chocolate-making workshops mix cultural legacy with instantaneous sensory sensations. Sensuality is another crucial element enhancing culinary tourism since it creates multi-sensory events. Combining taste, sight, smell, touch, and sound, according to Smith and Xiao (2008), boosts the emotional and cognitive impact of eating events, hence improving their memory. Innovative ideas as augmented reality (AR) and immersive storytelling intensify these encounters as Fan et al. (2022) stresses by turning sensory occurrences into participatory narratives. By use of such technology, chocolate tourism offers immersive, educational experiences and reduces the space between history and modernism.

The co-creation idea assists gastronomic tourism to be transformed by positioning guests as active partners. According to Martinez-Cañas et al. (2016), co-creation fosters cooperation among guests, surrounding companies, and operators, thereby producing richer and more tailored experiences. Interactive activities such as plantation visits help visitors engage in the chocolate tourism manufacturing process, strengthening their connections to local customs and people. According to Suwantoro et al. (2021), these activities not only increase visitor satisfaction but also empower local stakeholders, fostering growth and ensuring that gourmet tourism remains dynamic and inclusive.

This continuous interplay between academic models and actual experiences emphasises the adaptability of gastronomy tourism ideas. According to Pham et al. (2022), innovative approaches such as co-creation and the use of digital tools enhance stakeholder collaboration in branding efforts, fostering more dynamic and contextually relevant strategies. Chocolate tourism is a brilliant example of how experiences could develop and renew theoretical ideas through its mix of sensory immersion, sustainability, and teamwork. Chocolate tourism highlights the evolving character of gourmet tourism, in which experiential activities not only materialise theoretical ideas but also promote their development by always mixing invention with legacy. Interactive tourism experiences, such as chocolate seminars, align with current notions of co-creation and are further enhanced by incorporating modern technologies like augmented and virtual reality into cultural narratives, as highlighted by

Jung & Tom Dieck (2017). In these situations, the experiential component reveals the flexibility of gourmet tourism concepts in allowing new, growing activities, therefore defying the limits of traditional theory. This ongoing interaction of experience with theory underlines the importance of co-creation as a source of inspiration. According to Borseková & Vitálišová (2024), participatory models enable local companies and guests to collaboratively design travel offers that align with modern expectations while preserving cultural authenticity, fostering stakeholder empowerment in the process. Such developments create great space for the development of more inclusive ideas of gastronomic tourism. By combining technology, history, and interactivity into cohesive stories that bridge the distance between theoretical ideas and real-world action, chocolate tourism stresses this process through its several experiences. These interactions not only validate present values but also inspire new concepts suitable for changing visitor demands. Chocolate tourism presents chocolate as both a cultural artefact and a shifting platform for creativity, therefore illustrating how experienced actions could influence and extend theoretical frameworks. According to Carvalho et al. (2021), interaction, active participation, engagement, and personalization are central dimensions of co-creation experiences, allowing tourists to collaboratively shape value through immersive and participatory activities in food and wine tourism contexts. Chocolate tourism thus becomes a dynamic example of how theoretical ideas and practical practices coexist in a continual state of contact, developing one other in relation to cultural, technical, and financial advances. Chocolate tourism's continuous relevance in the evolving field of gourmet travel is demonstrated by its capacity to mix legacy with modernisation and enable co-creation.

Chapter 3. Sustainability in the Chocolate Industry

Since sustainability touches environmental, social, cultural, and financial aspects, it has become a top issue for the chocolate business. The possibilities and difficulties of including sustainable practices into tourism, chocolate making, and cocoa production as well as their impact on it looks at important problems such deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and ethical trade in addition to agroforestry, fair trade, and direct trade models supporting ethical manufacturing and fair distribution.

The chapter also examines how chocolate-based travel may promote sustainability by stressing projects that link customers with ethical sourcing and sustainable farming methods.

The value of certifications like Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance is explored as well as the part sustainable chocolate stores play in encouraging ethical consumerism. This chapter offers a whole picture of how sustainability ideas could influence the direction of the chocolate industry by tackling the cultural and financial importance of cocoa-growing towns.

3.1 Conceptualising Sustainability in Tourism

In order to handle the interactions among environmental preservation, social fairness, cultural preservation, and economic viability, sustainability in tourist development has grown to be a necessary framework. Concerns about the long-term effects of global tourism on local ecosystems and communities have driven an urgent demand for a more sustainable approach. As expressed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, p. 41): *"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

Extending the basic concepts outlined in the Brundtland Report, the idea of sustainability has been operationalised even more using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) released by the UN in 2015. Although promoting peace and riches, these goals provide a whole framework for addressing world problems including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. To ensure long-term sustainability, the United Nations (2015) highlights in tourism the need of balancing social justice, environmental preservation, and economic growth.

Four linked dimensions environmental, social, economic, and cultural often help one to understand sustainability in travel. In chocolate tourism, where sustainable practices are crucial for balancing local and worldwide effects, these elements especially apply since:

Sustainable chocolate travel helps to lower environmental damage by means of organic cultivation and regenerative agriculture, therefore fostering biodiversity. These help the preservation of natural habitats by aligning with initiatives against deforestation and minimisation of effects of climate change.

The social dimension gives fair treatment of local people and cocoa growers first priority. Fair trade models guarantee equitable salaries and empower local communities, therefore lowering the exploitation and advancing social justice.

Economic sustainability emphasises on generating chances for nearby companies by means of tastings, chocolate-making seminars, and plantation visits. These projects create money and help areas that produce cocoa to be long-term financially resilient.

Culturally, chocolate tourism shares the historical relevance of chocolate while simultaneously helping to maintain traditional methods of cocoa farming and manufacture. This preserves the legacy of communities who grow cocoa and increases respect of culture. The United Nations (2015) highlights how chocolate tourism exemplifies the application of sustainable development principles to create meaningful and impactful travel experiences. By integrating these elements, chocolate tourism connects local practices with global sustainability goals.

This definition emphasises the important equilibrium needed to satisfy current wants and save resources for next generations. This issue becomes especially complex in the chocolate industry since it interacts with indigenous farming methods, international trading systems, and the rising need for ethical and environmentally friendly goods. Thus, in areas where cocoa production supports both economic and cultural livelihoods, the sector provides a fascinating case study for learning how sustainability in tourism may offer both possibilities and difficulties.

3.2 Sustainability in the Chocolate Industry and Chocolate-based Tourism

In the chocolate business, sustainability is a complicated and multifarious interaction of social, environmental, cultural, and financial elements. Solving the issues stemming from the growing global demand for chocolate and their impact on areas of cocoa farming depends on these components absolutely. Fundamental for the making of chocolate, cocoa growing has long been linked with soil erosion, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity. In places like South-east Asia, Latin America, and West Africa where monoculture farming rules, this is especially clear. Kouassi et al. (2021) stress the environmental consequences of cocoa growing as comprising global warming, biodiversity decline, and land degradation underlining the vital need of sustainable farming methods that balance environmental conservation with agricultural productivity. Agroforestry techniques which mix cocoa growing with other trees and plants to maintain biodiversity and limit the negative affects of monoculture have attracted more and more interest as a means of solving environmental problems. These systems, according to Schroth et al. (2007), enhance soil quality, promote

natural pest control, and offer shade that keeps microclimates for cocoa growth steady. Furthermore important for mitigating climate change is agroforestry systems, which store substantially more carbon than traditional monoculture crops. These techniques also improve resilience, allowing farmers to adjust to the effects of climatic unpredictability and protect important habitat for wildlife.

Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and matching ethical shopping with environmental protection have been much aided by tourism projects. Projects like ChocoMuseo in Peru show how travel may provide immersive experiences and teach consumers about sustainability. Such projects, according to Jagdish Chander Dagar et al. (2023), give guests the chance to see cocoa fields built with biodiversity preservation in mind, therefore developing knowledge of how sustainable farming methods help to maintain ecosystems. By means of interactive activities including chocolate-making seminars, guests meet with farmers and learn about how their consumption decisions could assist sustainable development. This contact enhances the link between visitors and the surroundings, so sustainability becomes a natural component of the vacation trip. Since sustainability in chocolate travel fits with worldwide concerns of ethical consumption, environmental responsibility, and economic fairness, it is even more important. Sustainable travel, according to Blichfeldt and Halkier (2014), makes use of local resources such as food events to promote social and economic growth in rural areas, therefore guaranteeing long-term advantages while maintaining cultural identity. Pacari Chocolate is one of the initiatives that best shows this dedication by including direct trade relationships and environmental preservation into their manufacture. These projects provide guests with educational opportunities to increase knowledge of the social and environmental issues affecting cocoa growers, therefore promoting more ethical consumption. Projects in Ghana and Peru also underline profit-sharing programs meant to help farmers using conventional farming techniques. As Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020) advise, including sustainability into travel not only protects the local enterprises but also helps to preserve the cultural and ecological integrity of places.

Certifications include Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, and UTZ have helped the chocolate business to incorporate environmental ideas more deeply. According to Ollendorf (2023), these certificates not only guarantee adherence to strict environmental criteria but also function as powerful marketing tools drawing in environmentally sensitive consumers. Certified farms in Costa Rica and Ecuador show how sustainability requirements could

concurrently help nearby companies and environmental protection. These certifications also assist guarantee a more equitable sharing of economic advantages by tying consumer demand with sustainability, therefore supporting the financial stability of cocoa-growing towns. Apart from environmental difficulties, the chocolate business deals with important social ones including economic exploitation, gender inequality, and child labour. Roberts (2023) emphasises the systematic character of these difficulties, with millions of youngsters working under exploitative conditions in nations including Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in cocoa-producing nations. By ensuring equitable pay and promoting community development, initiatives such as equitable Trade and Direct Trade aim to correct these discrepancies. Projects like Kuapa Kokoo in Ghana show the good results of these initiatives by offering necessary infrastructure including schools and access to pure water. Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa (2014) claims that these projects not only raise the standard of living for areas that cultivate cocoa but also help to create long-term social and financial stability.

Another essential element of social sustainability is gender equality inside the cocoa chain. Women, who are vital for the development of cocoa, sometimes suffer with limited access to leadership roles and financial marginalisation. Initiatives like Divine Chocolate, according to Doherty (2018), have achieved great strides towards gender equality by arming women via financial independence and leadership possibilities. These initiatives not only question conventional gender roles but also help to increase the resilience of cocoa-growing communities by varying their social and economic contributions. Cultural sustainability is also quite important, particularly in places where cocoa has tremendous historical and spiritual value. For millennia, Mesoamerican societies including the Maya and Aztecs have revolved on cocoa. Maintaining these traditions is greatly threatened, though, by industrialisation and globalisation. Zhou and Edelheim (2021) underline that maintaining indigenous identities and traditional practices depends critically on cultural tourism. Visitors can engage in pre- Columbian hand-grinding of cocoa beans in Oaxaca, Mexico, for instance, therefore strengthening their respect of the traditional legacy of chocolate. Chocolate tourism improves the visitor experience by means of financial incentives for the preservation of local customs, therefore promoting cultural sustainability.

Within the chocolate sector, economic sustainability mostly relates to making sure small-scale cocoa producers receive just compensation and consistent revenue. Opatz (2020) emphasises the need of systems like minimum price guarantees and direct trading practices since market volatility sometimes leaves farmers exposed to financial instability. These

approaches establish confidence between consumers and producers, therefore guaranteeing fair remuneration for farmers. Projects as CACAU São Tomé focused on community-based tourism also show how tourism may diversify revenue sources, hence lessening reliance on changing world commodities markets. These projects combine sustainable methods with area history and culture to offer significant experiences that help local businesses as well as guests. Emphasising ethical eating, environmental preservation, and economic growth, sustainability has become a foundation of culinary travel. The World Bank (2021) claims that sustainable projects such organic cocoa production and certification programs boost local producers economically while also supporting environmental preservation and matching with worldwide sustainability criteria. Projects like Pacari Chocolate show the transforming power of travel in promoting environmental and social responsibility by combining sustainable approaches from fair trade agreements to biodiversity preservation.
Collectively, environmental preservation, social equity, cultural legacy, and economic resilience show how sustainability may be a compass for moral and responsible behaviour in the chocolate sector. Opatz (2020) contends that a comprehensive approach to sustainability not only enables other businesses to get insightful analysis but also helps local practices match worldwide sustainability goals. Through inclusive and thorough policies, the chocolate industry might lead in the growth of sustainability by encouraging cooperation and innovation.

3.2.1 Contribution of Sustainable Chocolate Shops to Sustainability

Sustainable chocolate shops exemplify progressive retail that incorporates sustainability into every facet of their operations. These businesses may adopt principles similar to those promoted by Fairtrade, supporting broader ethical production and responsible consumption. It is important to highlight that while these shops present practices that align with economic, social, and environmental sustainability, their actual impact is still developing. Krauss & Barrientos (2021, p. 3) note that *"Fairtrade was the most popular sustainability standard for cocoa in the 2000s, reflecting the movement's success in building credibility."* This illustrates how the ethical practices inspired by Fairtrade can foster social and environmental justice in sustainable chocolate retail.
This section investigates how these shops, by emphasizing the importance of chocolate origins and consumer engagement, may contribute to the industry's sustainability goals. This

exploration takes into account the potential these chocolate shops have to develop a stronger connection between consumers and producers. Krauss & Barrientos (2021, p. 15) observe that the *"shift towards greater private-sector involvement may also be an acknowledgement of the insufficiency of past efforts to improve socio-environmental production conditions for the majority of cocoa smallholders."* This highlights how proprietary sustainability programs, inspired by Fairtrade principles but adapted to the private sector, can impact transparency and ethical integrity within the sector.

Sustainable chocolate stores are essential in cultivating relationships with local communities, prompting consumers to connect with the roots of their chocolate. The importance of this engagement can be viewed as a potential to further strengthen these relationships, creating a demand for more ethical and transparent practices. Krauss & Barrientos (2021, p. 15) emphasize that *"sustainability standards such as Fairtrade that rely heavily on ethical justification have drawn predominantly on civic and domestic norms around trust, place attachment, and socio-environmental benefits, as well as connectedness between consumers and producers."* This reflects the broader role of sustainable chocolate stores, which, while not necessarily Fairtrade-certified, often adhere to ethical production standards that promote a sense of social responsibility and connection with consumers and communities.

3.2.1.1 Ethical Sourcing and Fair Trade Practices

Particularly in terms of ethical sourcing, sustainable chocolate retailers have great potential to contribute significantly to the industry by means of partnerships with cocoa growers implementing fair and environmentally friendly farming practices. Sustainable retailers sometimes employ direct trade, which lets them bargain directly with cocoa growers so that more of the profits might make their way back to the suppliers. Ekechukwu (2024, p. 2) notes: *"Building enduring relationships with suppliers while simultaneously advancing environmental and social goals as a primary business purpose is the long-term aim of sustainable sourcing."* Through such potential practices, these stores could not only pay fair wages but also foster long-term relationships that encourage sustainable agriculture methods.

Apart from direct trade, many environmentally conscious chocolate stores may choose to buy certified Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance cocoa, thereby supporting systems that

prioritize fair wages and safe working conditions. Ekechukwu (2024, p. 4) states: *"(...) sustainable sourcing involves incorporating criteria related to social, ethical, and environmental performance into supplier selection processes."* For customers, these certifications can act as reassurance that their purchases benefit cocoa-growing communities and uphold ethical business practices.

By potentially adopting ethical sourcing strategies, sustainable chocolate stores can uphold the industry's dedication to social and economic fairness, thereby modelling practices that other stores might follow. Ekechukwu (2024, p. 5) highlights: *"Sustainable sourcing plays a pivotal role in minimising the adverse environmental effects associated with procurement operations while ensuring fair treatment of employees and fostering community growth (TraceX, 2023)."*

3.2.1.2 Consumer Engagement and Education

Sustainable chocolate retailers can greatly influence consumers' knowledge of the social and environmental consequences of their purchases. These stores provide information about the sources of their chocolate, the farming methods applied, and the ethical standards followed, therefore enabling consumers to make educated decisions consistent with their values. This openness might inspire consumers to consider the ethical consequences of their purchases and foster responsible consumption, therefore strengthening trust.

Hackendahl (2022, p. 59) states*: "Consumers of chocolate products are not informed about production processes, especially about supply chains. The efforts of other stakeholders are not meaningful if consumers are not educated about the progress."* Sustainable stores might incorporate educational activities into the retail experience, such as in-store seminars, tastings, and informational displays that highlight the stories behind their products. Some stores could use interactive tools like QR codes to allow consumers to trace the path their chocolate takes from farm to shelf, thereby creating a direct link to the people and techniques involved in its production.

To emphasize the potential role of these organizations in consumer education, Hackendahl (2022, p. 59) states: *"Human rights organizations should not solely concentrate on changing rules within the production process of chocolate products. Rather, they should also focus on educating the end market."* By including consumers in the sustainability dialogue, these

stores could contribute to creating a more informed and conscious consumer base, thereby supporting the demand for ethically produced chocolate.

3.2.1.3 Environmental Responsibility in Operations

Sustainable chocolate companies can greatly help to contribute to environmental sustainability outside of sourcing by means of their operations. Using recyclable, biodegradable, or compostable packaging materials supports the circular economy and helps many to adopt a zero-waste attitude. These stores might minimise their environmental impact and show that environmentally friendly retail operations are possible by cutting the usage of single-use plastics and supporting sustainable packaging options. This emphasis on sustainability fits consumer perceptions since Hackendahl (2022, p. 55) notes: *"The compliance with ethical standards was not the most important aspect to respondents in their past decision-making process. However, they have thought about it during the purchase of chocolate products."*

Another way that eco-friendly chocolate stores could support environmental sustainability is through energy efficiency. By potentially utilising technologies such as LED lighting and advanced climate control systems, and by sourcing energy from renewable options, these stores might reduce their carbon footprint and dependency on fossil fuels. Hackendahl (2022, p. 7) supports this commitment, stating: *"Companies take further accountability, regarding the sustainability and compliance with ethical standards (Lambrechts, 2021)."*

These potential eco-friendly practices could set a benchmark for sustainable retail and inspire other chocolate companies to adopt similar measures.

3.2.1.4 Community Involvement and Social Impact

Sustainable chocolate stores can serve as significant contributors to projects that support local and global communities, extending their commitment to social sustainability beyond fair trade policies. These stores are well-positioned to collaborate with environmental groups, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions to promote awareness of sustainability. Vesala-Varttala et al. (2021, p. 3) state: *"(…) ethics helps people decide, for example, how to live and what to buy."* By organizing waste-reducing seminars or supporting

environmentally conscious community events, these stores can enhance their advocacy for sustainable living.

Sustainable chocolate shops can support community development efforts that address essential needs like education, healthcare, and access to clean water in cocoa-producing regions. By partnering with local NGOs, they ensure these initiatives are culturally relevant and adapted to meet specific local needs. Vesala-Varttala et al. (2021, p. 14) highlight the strategic importance of such efforts: *"(…) improving the quality, visibility, availability, and accessibility of sustainable products and services was regarded as strategically important."*

3.2.1.5 Setting a Standard for Sustainable Retail

Sustainable chocolate retailers have the potential to set a new standard for excellence in ethical commerce within the chocolate industry by integrating strong ethical standards into their operations. These stores demonstrate the value of responsible sourcing, educating consumers, environmental stewardship, and active community engagement, all essential for building a more ethical and sustainable chocolate sector. León Bravo et al. (2021, p. 59) assert: *"(…) companies also implemented several initiatives with and for their suppliers regarding know-how transfer, spreading the fair-trade culture and principles, adding value to the production process, finding their competitive differentiation and widening their target markets."*

By means of their activities, sustainable chocolate stores show the possibility for retail to propel constructive change in the sector. León Bravo et al. (2021, p. 54) emphasize: *"(…) sustainability logic was illustrated by activities deployed for local development, to enhance tradition/culture and to respect the environment/biodiversity (…)."*

3.2.2 Consumer Considerations on Chocolate Origins

Reflecting the increasing knowledge and desire for ethically produced and environmentally sustainable products, provenance has become a major determinant of consumer choices in the modern chocolate sector. In this context, provenance refers to the entire cocoa journey from smallholder farms to the final transformation and sale in chocolate goods. Understanding this journey is not only about fulfilling curiosity but also about ensuring that purchases meet ethical criteria around labor conditions, environmental impact, and economic

equity. Massaglia et al. (2023, p. 4) state that "*(…) consumers who prefer dark and extra dark chocolate seek ethical and environmental sustainability attributes."*

Understanding the geographical and cultural foundations of cocoa farming helps consumers establish a closer connection with the product, reinforcing the significance of chocolate provenance. This relationship enriches experiential travel, as tourists increasingly pursue meaningful interactions with local cultures and sustainable practices. Regions renowned for cocoa production, including Ghana, Ecuador, and some areas of Southeast Asia, have become sought-after destinations for travellers interested in ethical sourcing and immersive culinary experiences. Massaglia et al. (2023, p. 4) observe*: "(…) the clarity and transparency of labels support consumer needs related to the increasing demand to make informed and conscious choices (…)."*

Transparent labeling and tracking methods are particularly valuable for destinations marketing single-origin or artisanal chocolates, as these products often reflect the distinct flavor profiles connected with a specific terroir. Single-origin chocolates thus serve as both a marker of quality and an attraction, enhancing the tourist experience. Massaglia et al. (2023, p. 2) highlight this by stating: *"The chocolate market is a multidimensional environment in which emotional, hedonic, health, ethical, sustainable and traditional aspects are all identifiable in a unique product."*

The emphasis on provenance aligns well with the trend in tourism toward responsible consumption, as ethical sourcing and transparency are increasingly important to tourists. For instance, Fair Trade-certified chocolate, organic labeling, and single-origin products appeal to a market of environmentally conscious travelers. Massaglia et al. (2023, p. 23) indicate: *"(…) preferences for social factors were few and thus unlikely to outweigh dominant product quality attributes such as brand and ingredients."*

Furthermore, provenance as a quality indicator impacts more than just consumer satisfaction; it influences environmentally responsible stores that prefer to source from farms practicing sustainable methods. In regions like Latin America and Africa, which see a growing influx of tourists seeking ethical chocolate, tourism's demand for responsible sourcing encourages sustainable agricultural practices. Many chocolate retailers thus support biodiversity by working with farms that adopt organic or regenerative methods, which directly benefits not only the tourist experience but also the environmental health of local communities.

In summary, by offering traceable chocolates with rich origins, sustainable chocolate stores cater to a segment of the tourism market that values both quality and social responsibility.

This approach helps establish a standard of transparency and ethical sourcing in the industry, attracting a consumer base that seeks authentic, meaningful, and environmentally aligned travel experiences.

3.2.3 Industry Responsibility for Chocolate Industry: Trade Models

Due to erratic cocoa prices and unfair profit distribution across the supply chain, many cocoa producers face significant financial difficulties. Trade models in the chocolate sector are therefore crucial for guaranteeing economic sustainability for cocoa growers. By using ethical trade practices, sustainable chocolate stores help maintain a system where financial gains from cocoa production are more equitably distributed, thereby contributing to economic stability in cocoa-producing areas. Ankuyi et al. (2023, p. 2) illustrate the impact of certification on sustainability, stating: *"Certification largely increases the producers' environmental, social, and economic security (Arnould et al., 2009)."* By employing ethical trade practices, including Fair Trade, Direct Trade, and Small Producer Certification, these stores set a standard for conscientious procurement, ensuring fair compensation, social justice, and environmental responsibility.

By encouraging long-term relationships between chocolate stores and cocoa growers, ethical trade models transcend simple exchanges. More than merely fair prices, these alliances provide cocoa growers with stability, access to training, and tools for sustainable farming methods. Ankuyi et al. (2023, p. 20) highlight the role of financial and livelihood stability, noting that *"(...) farmers with higher levels of compliance are more likely to have higher cocoa farm income, pay for labour, and increase non-farm income."* With this financial foundation, ethical trade models encourage farmers to invest in ecologically friendly agricultural practices, thereby enhancing crop resilience and supporting surrounding ecosystems. From farming to retail, this multifaceted strategy ensures that accountability is maintained at every level of the cocoa supply chain.

3.2.3.1 Fair Trade

The Fair Trade model, one of the best-known ethical certifications, is designed to shield farmers from market volatility and ensure fair compensation. By providing a minimum price, Fair Trade helps protect cocoa farmers from global market fluctuations, acting as a financial

safety net. Ankuyi et al. (2023, p. 4) emphasize the positive impact of certification, stating: *"(...) certified farmers enjoy much better living conditions than non-certified farmers."* Fair Trade's financial stability enables farmers to invest in their land, improve crop quality, and adopt environmentally friendly practices.

Beyond fair pricing, Fair Trade provides a social premium, an additional fund for community-led development projects in infrastructure, healthcare, and education key to the resilience of cocoa-growing communities. However, Fair Trade certification also presents challenges, particularly the costs associated with compliance. Laurenzio (2023, pp. 19-20) explains: *"(...) the price premium for certified cocoa is not always enough to offset additional certification costs (Fenger et al., 2017, p. 163)."* This highlights the financial burden on smallholders, which can make certification difficult to sustain. By helping cover these costs, sustainable chocolate stores can extend the benefits of Fair Trade to a wider range of producers.

Apart from providing an economic support system, the Fair Trade approach supports social and environmental norms that help in long-term sustainability. Laurenzio (2023, p. 17) indicates: *"Certification schemes are crucial for producers looking to target specialty or HV markets in the agro-industry."* Participating in Fair Trade helps sustainable chocolate stores show a dedication to industry responsibility that goes beyond mere profit and sets a benchmark for ethical sourcing, thereby improving the overall sustainability of the chocolate sector.

3.2.3.2 Direct Trade

Offering a more flexible framework that gives direct interactions between chocolate shops and cocoa producers top priority, Direct Trade provides an alternative to certification-based methods. Bypassing conventional middlemen, this trade approach allows chocolate stores to deal directly with farmers, ensuring fair remuneration and more equitable profit sharing. Laurenzio (2023, p. 121) explains: *"In specialty cocoa chains, intermediaries are removed, and farmers receive higher wages."* Direct Trade emphasizes quality-linked pricing, where farmers receive incentives based on the quality of their cocoa, encouraging sustainable, high-quality production practices.

Through Direct Trade, environmentally conscious chocolate stores form long-term partnerships with cocoa growers, fostering mutual trust and knowledge exchange. These

partnerships allow cocoa growers to meet the expectations of an increasingly conscientious consumer base by providing insights into market needs and sustainable farming practices. Laurenzio (2023, p. 16) further notes: *"When buyers trade directly with farmers' groups and cooperatives, trust is built as producers consistently supply the best quality cocoa, certified through the organization."* Apart from financial gains, Direct Trade supports social and environmental sustainability through ethical farming practices, empowering farmers to make decisions that benefit both their communities and the environment.

Direct Trade also grants chocolate stores greater freedom to customize environmental projects to meet the unique needs of each farming community. This flexibility is especially beneficial to smallholder farmers, whose local market conditions, geographic location, or resource availability may present unique challenges. Through this more responsive and fair trade model, Direct Trade enables sustainable chocolate stores to provide targeted support that addresses these specific issues, thereby reinforcing the industry's commitment to social responsibility.

3.2.3.3 Small Producer Certification

An ethical trade paradigm, Small Producer Certification provides smallholder farmers with an accessible and affordable certification method that emphasizes economic inclusiveness. Unlike some certification programs that impose high costs and strict criteria, Small Producer Certification offers a structure that assists small-scale farmers by distinguishing their products in international markets and ensuring fair access to premium markets. Laurenzio (2023, p. 53) highlights this, stating: *"(...) certification labels such as Fairtrade International (FTI) and Rainforest Alliance help to distinguish farmers' cocoa in international markets as higher quality and sustainably produced."* Sustainable chocolate stores aiming to support diverse and often marginalized producers contribute to an inclusive supply chain that fosters both economic fairness and cultural preservation.

Beyond financial access, Small Producer Certification encourages traditional, low-impact, and environmentally friendly farming methods. These practices, such as organic farming, polyculture, and agroforestry, align with broader environmental goals, helping to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem health. Laurenzio (2023, p. 69) notes: *"Sustainable production begins with access to quality genetic materials. Seedlings that are organic and produced without agrochemicals reap better harvests and are more adaptable to climate change."* By

supporting Small Producer Certification, sustainable chocolate stores promote a comprehensive approach to sustainability, advocating for an ethical trade model that prioritizes cultural heritage and ecological resilience.

Small Producer Certification represents a modern trade paradigm that values the unique contributions of smallholder farmers and provides the financial support needed for their success in a competitive global market. Laurenzio (2023, p. 15) stresses: *"Price premiums are promised by certifying bodies to give producers a set maximum price despite market fluctuations (Gayi & Tsowou, 2016)."* By sourcing from small producer-certified farms, sustainable chocolate shops strengthen their leadership in industry responsibility, supporting a trade system that champions inclusivity, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability.

3.2.3.4 Preservation of Cultural and Social Identity

The preservation of cultural and social identity in cocoa-producing countries has great possibilities as a fundamental component of sustainable development given the close links between cocoa growing and local customs, values, and community structures. Sustainable chocolate stores have the power to support the preservation of cultural landscapes by matching projects honouring and celebrating the legacy of these local communities. These retailers could decide to buy chocolate from areas where local customs and practices entwine with cocoa farming, therefore preserving traditional knowledge and cultural practices. However, Pinheiro Martins et al. (2023, p. 264) highlight that: *"The composition of the cocoa industry fails to support smaller players, as wealth is very unevenly distributed."* This indicates that structural challenges may impact the effectiveness of such initiatives in benefiting local communities.

The influence of the chocolate industry on cultural preservation could extend beyond sourcing practices. Many environmentally friendly chocolate stores should look at ways to help projects aimed at strengthening local cultures promoting community development. They might, for instance, think about financing events honouring the cultural legacy of cocoa or instructional programs targeted at younger generations teaching sustainable growing techniques. Such projects could help communities to preserve their cultural resilience, therefore allowing them to keep their own identities and participate in a worldwide economy. Pinheiro Martins and colleagues (2023, p. 264) observe: *"Initiatives that result in a living*

income and optimise productivity while simultaneously limiting environmental impacts require sectoral transformation (...)." This emphasizes the need for broader systemic changes to support sustainable practices in the cocoa industry.

By aligning with cultural preservation objectives, sustainable chocolate shops could potentially foster a model of sustainability that embraces social and cultural aspects of cocoa production alongside environmental and economic considerations. This focus on cultural identity might further open up avenues for meaningful engagement with consumers. Through sharing stories of cocoa farms, communities, and traditions linked to each product, these shops could create a richer consumer experience. Pinheiro Martins et al. (2023, p. 274) remark that: *"In addition, increasing the income for cocoa farmers is linked to other civilizational challenges, such as climate action (Osei, 2017; Amfo and Ali, 2020) and dwindling biodiversity (Target 15.9)."* This highlights that broader consumer awareness and support for sustainable cocoa practices could contribute to addressing these wider issues, thus enhancing both economic and environmental sustainability. This narrative approach has the potential to deepen consumers' appreciation of cocoa's cultural significance, enhancing both the perceived ethical value of the store's practices and the overall value of the product itself.

3.2.3.5 Other Sustainable Measures

Using a theoretical model of an ideal sustainable chocolate shop helps one to academically soundly investigate the highest requirements of sustainability within the chocolate business. This model is a carefully built analytical framework meant to investigate best practices that could reasonably be embraced by chocolate companies dedicated to environmental and social responsibility, not a casual hypothetical situation. Based on evidence-based methods and generally accepted sustainability criteria, this ideal provides a benchmark for a chocolate shop to illustrate how rigorously committed to sustainability across its whole supply chain and customer interaction strategy should be operated.

However, Opatz (2020, p. 12) highlights: *"The cocoa market is characterised by a long and often disorganised supply chain, with a complex trading network that involves many intermediaries."* This complexity underscores the challenges that sustainable chocolate shops may face in ensuring transparent and accountable sourcing practices.

This kind of approach goes beyond the boundaries usually found in case studies of particular companies, where data unreliability or access restrictions can hide a complete knowledge of sustainable practices. Rather, this theoretical method shows realistic industry norms and lets one have a whole perspective of best practices. Opatz (2020, p. 22) observes: *"The well-established Anker methodology for estimating living wages (Anker & Anker, 2017) can be conceptualised for living income benchmark calculations."* This benchmark could serve as a useful tool for sustainable chocolate shops to aim for income stability among cocoa farmers, a crucial aspect of social responsibility.

The perfect chocolate store here acts as an aspirational benchmark, offering a methodologically sound framework that shows how a company dedicated to sustainability may combine ecologically friendly, economically sensible, and socially conscious ideas at every operational level. Opatz (2020, p. 36) remarks: *"(...) transparency includes both normative principles, such as democracy, participation, and accountability, as well as substantive principles."* This reinforces the importance of transparency as a guiding principle for sustainable chocolate businesses in their efforts to build accountable and fair supply chains.

This analytical technique is well-established in scholarly literature spanning sectors like business studies and sustainability, providing an efficient means to define criteria that real-world chocolate companies might seek to embrace and adapt.

This analytical approach is well-established in academic literature spanning disciplines including business studies and sustainability, offering an effective means to identify criteria that real-world chocolate companies could wish to adopt and modify. Key sustainable actions that chocolate companies may take including eco-friendly packaging, energy efficiency, carbon offset projects, and community involvement are covered in the following subjects.

An ideal sustainable chocolate company would embrace a zero-waste philosophy, using only recyclable, biodegradable, or compostable packaging materials. This approach significantly reduces landfill waste, lowers the risk of plastic pollution, and minimizes the company's environmental footprint. Galanakis (2022, p. 28) highlights: *“Nowadays, the packaging designs are focused not only on protecting the product inside by extending shelf-life, marketing communication, but also to reduce the toxicity of the materials and be sustainable being re-usable and eco-friendly (Babalis et al., 2013).”* This approach aligns with the

broader goal of resource conservation and contributes to the principles of the circular economy by reducing consumer waste.

Furthermore, such a strategy could include refill stations where consumers may bring their own containers, allowing for bulk chocolate purchases without single-use packaging. This would enhance the sensory and emotional appeal of the product as well. Galanakis (2022, p. 28) notes: *"Maleki et al. (2020) found that chocolate packaged with graphic design generates emotional responses more than the packaging material, suggesting that chocolate packages should be designed taking into account the gender differences."* By incorporating design features that appeal to consumers, sustainable chocolate enterprises can develop packaging that is both environmentally friendly and emotionally appealing.

Different varieties of chocolate products necessitate particular material concerns. For instance, Galanakis (2022, p. 27) elucidates: *"For panned chocolate the common packed material is polypropylene film filled with a mixture of gas like air composition. However, the use of vacuum packing or modified atmosphere may preserve better the panned fruits as cherries, figs or nuts as hazelnuts and almonds."* Such choices in packaging materials help maintain product quality while aligning with sustainable practices.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

This approach can achieve energy efficiency by relying on renewable resources and energy-saving technologies, such as LED lighting, efficient cooling systems, and optimized climate control. The chocolate shop might lessen its carbon footprint by relying less on fossil fuels, thus aligning with industry-wide climate action targets. Cyellum - Sustainable Management Practices Exam Prep (p. 85) emphasizes: *"Energy efficiency is another significant area where retailers are making considerable strides. Retail outlets, despite their varied nature, consume a substantial amount of energy through heating, cooling, lighting, and electronic appliances. To address this, many retailers are investing in energy-efficient technologies and practices. This includes the adoption of LED lighting, enhanced HVAC systems, and smart energy management systems that optimize energy use."*

The shop's dedication to environmental responsibility could be enhanced by integrating renewable energy sources. Cyellum - Sustainable Management Practices Exam Prep (p. 85) states: *"Additionally, some retailers are incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines to power their store operations, drastically reducing their dependence on fossil fuels."* This approach not only supports environmental sustainability but also provides an operational model for other businesses in the sector to follow.

Beyond simply lowering direct emissions, a truly sustainable chocolate business could explore engaging in carbon offset initiatives aimed at the rehabilitation of ecosystems. Such initiatives hold the potential to finance reforestation or soil restoration in areas impacted by deforestation associated with chocolate production. Houghton (2020, p. 3) highlights: *"(...) providing financial support for agroforestry through carbon offsetting can have a significant social impact for impoverished communities."* These efforts not only help reduce carbon emissions but also support ecosystem health and biodiversity in cacao farming regions. Houghton (2020, p. 5) explains: *"(...) agroforestry can be used as a mechanism for preventing deforestation and carbon offsets can be generated based on the carbon loss avoided, generating carbon credits with greater speed and scale than afforestation projects."*

In alignment with the broader environmental strategy of the store, carbon offsets could bolster worldwide initiatives to combat climate change and advance a sustainable model mindful of both local and global environmental impacts. Houghton (2020, p. 5) indicates: *"Integrating carbon offsetting into agroforestry systems has a variety of significant obstacles, particularly high transaction costs with limited return, the complexity of making these projects work successfully, and uncertainty around both financial rewards and the legitimacy of the credits."* Therefore, building reliable partnerships becomes essential. Houghton (2020, p. 3) further notes: *"(...) the aggregation of smallholder farmers in partnership with trustworthy intermediary organizations that provide technical support and training, measurement and verification tools, support with upfront costs, accountability for additionality and permanence, and connections to broader carbon markets."*

A perfect sustainable chocolate shop will interact with local and worldwide communities to spread its benefits beyond its daily activities. Locally, this approach can involve cooperation with environmental organizations, local businesses, and educational institutions to promote awareness about sustainability. Tolettini & Eleonora Di Maria (2023, p. 10) emphasize: *"(...) the social dimension of sustainability also plays a fundamental role in the economic strategy of a company in this industrial sector, by creating a workplace where employees can be personally and professionally satisfied (...)."*

Funding social projects not only shows the chocolate shop's commitment to sustainability but also to local involvement and worldwide social responsibility. Using this rigorous approach, the perfect sustainable chocolate shop represents a whole approach to

sustainability and sets industry aspirational criteria. This model shows how a company may successfully strike a balance between environmental and social responsibility and profitability, therefore offering a reproducible model that other chocolate companies could aim to follow.

Section II. Viability of a Sustainable Chocolate Shop in Lisbon

In this part of the project, the focus shifts toward understanding how a sustainable chocolate shop could realistically take shape in Lisbon. It looks into the current market landscape, explores consumer preferences, and considers the practical and environmental challenges involved in running such a business. By examining these factors, the aim is to assess whether the concept is not only desirable but also achievable, responding effectively to local expectations and the growing interest among tourists in ethical and meaningful food experiences.

Chapter 4. Characterization of Gastronomic Tourism in Lisbon, Regarding Chocolate Business Shops

Lisbon's reputation as a holiday destination is much shaped by gastronomic tourism, which combines gastronomic pleasures with cultural legacy. Rich in history, with a varied cuisine, and under increasing focus on sustainability, the city is a major participant in world gourmet travel. Chocolate has become more and more important in this changing terrain not just as a gastronomic treat but also as a product connected to sustainability, ethical sourcing, and handcrafted manufacture.

With an eye towards the influence of chocolate business stores on consumer experiences and market trends, this chapter investigates Lisbon's culinary tourism. It looks at how local food culture, environmentally friendly methods of living, and changing demand for premium, ethically produced chocolate interact. It also tackles the possibilities and difficulties chocolate stores encounter in a market going more and more competitive and environmentally conscious.

The gastronomic attractiveness of Lisbon is closely related to the genuineness of its cuisine. Food authenticity can be seen as the genuineness of local cuisine that is unique to an area

and serves as a type of description of the local culture, as Heriana (2022, p. 7) observes. Chocolate provides tourists with an immersive and ethical gastronomic experience, therefore enhancing its authenticity as both a cultural and commercial offering.

4.1 Gastronomic Tourism in Lisbon: A General Overview

Lisbon has amply shown itself as one of Europe's most cultural and gastronomic attractions using its rich historical background, diversified gourmet traditions, and commitment to sustainable travel. As tourism remains a pillar of the city's economy, Roland Berger (2019) has been especially crucial in fostering job creation, urban revitalisation, and international branding. Rising above well-known gourmet hotspots such Barcelona, Copenhagen, Florence, London, Paris, and Vienna (Público, 2024), during the World Culinary Awards in 2024 Lisbon was crowned Best Culinary City in Europe. Lisbon's gastronomic diversity from historic tascas and pastelarias validates its worldwide reputation from Michelin-starred restaurants operated by eminent chefs like Henrique Sá Pessoa (Alma) and José Avillez (Belcanto). With urban food markets like Time Out Market standing out as major tourist attractions, Lisbon's gastronomy scene has been very important in drawing visitors seeking immersive culinary experiences (Madeira et al., 2023).
With travellers actively seeking immersive events including cooking courses, market visits, and farm-to--table dining (Carvalho, Kastenholz, & Carneiro, 2023; Turunen & Varjonen, 2024), Lisbon's gourmet tourism sector is seeing an increasing demand for experiential and interactive food tourism aligned with modern food travel trends. The city has positioned itself as a place where culinary authenticity, preservation of legacy cross-roads, and innovation cross-roads. Henderson (2009) emphasises how food tourism improves regional cuisine and guest experiences, therefore supporting the cultural character of a given location. This is in line with trends seen in Lisbon, where growing worldwide respect of Portuguese cuisine, the revival of traditional food markets, and increasing attention on ecological cooking techniques shapes the gourmet landscape of the city.
Having seen amazing increase in travel throughout the previous ten years, Lisbon is now among the most popular holiday destinations in Europe. Rising hotel demand, more guests, and a calculated shift towards high-value tourism have driven this expansion, therefore strengthening the economic basis of the city. Investments in infrastructure, food, and cultural attractions have improved Lisbon's attraction to both long-distance and temporary guests.

Lisbon had 3.3 million visitor arrivals and 8.4 million overnight stays in September 2024, therefore exhibiting this increasing trend (Estatísticas Rápidas de Turismo, 2024) indicating yearly growth rates of 2.8% and 2.4% respectively. Occupancy rates above pre-pandemic levels caused the hotel sector to have a 5.6% increase in Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) in 2024 (Associação Turismo de Lisboa, 2025). With a 5% annual growth rate (Roland Berger, 2019), the travel sector brought in approximately €800 million in revenue in 2019. This financial impact highlights not just an increase in visitor count but also a shift towards high-value tourism whereby guests spend more on hotel, activities, and food. Reflecting a growing taste in luxury meals, fine dining experiences, and cultural events, the average trip cost was €898.30 (Roland Berger, 2019).

Among Lisbon's most travelled to countries are France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States (Roland Berger, 2019). Reflecting its increasing popularity worldwide, the city also boasts a notable increase in long-distance Asian and North American tourists. Seasonality data show that driven by corporate travel and cultural activities boosting off-season visitors, the main travel period runs April to October. Research on travel motivation reveal that Lisbon's appeal to tourists depends much on its cuisine and culture. Especially at urban food markets like Time Out Market Lisbon, culinary experiences significantly influence visitor happiness and expenditure. Reflecting a growing worldwide interest in Portuguese cuisine, food tourism has grown to be a major component of Lisbon's economic and cultural attractiveness (Madeira et al., 2023).
Deeply ingrained in Lisbon's culinary character are historical connections shaped by Mediterranean customs, Atlantic trade networks, and the heritage of Portuguese colonisation. Travellers looking for real and immersive food experiences (Dias & Patuleia, 2021) find this gastronomic legacy adds to the city's attractiveness as a site for culinary tourism. Maintaining culinary identity and evolving with the times of travel, the food sector of the city essentially strikes a blend between innovation and legacy. Lisbon's cuisine is based on quality, fresh ingredients, especially seafood, which is rather common in regional cuisines. Underlining Lisbon's great Atlantic link and fishing background are grilled sardines, polvo à lagareiro, and bacalhau à Brás (Silva, 2018). Petiscos, Portugal's version of tapas pastéis de bacalhau, amêijoas à Bulhão Pato, and chouriço assado emphasize the social and communal elements of eating in Lisbon. The city is also well-known for its pastries; pastéis de nata are the most famous treat from Belém's monasteries. Other well-

known sweets, such travesseiros and queijadas de Sintra, underline the influence of monastery and Moorish baking techniques (Moreira & Neto, 2016).
Maintaining culinary tradition while embracing modern cuisine depends much on Lisbon's food markets. Beyond traditional markets, Lisbon hosts a number of specialised food fairs, including the Mercado da Ribeira, which has been revitalised into a major gastronomic hub attracting both locals and visitors, the Mercado de Campo de Ourique, which successfully combines traditional commerce with modern culinary experiences, and the Mercado de Arroios, a key economic and social pillar of its neighbourhood reflecting the function of municipal markets in preserving local trade and community involvement (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2016).
Though Lisbon is generally known for its wines, pastries, and seafood, chocolate has become ever more essential notably in the luxury and hand-made gourmet environment. With carefully chosen harmony seminars and guided tastings improving visitor involvement, chocolate tastings, speciality pairings and locally manufactured confections are becoming more and more sought for in Lisbon. These encounters include chocolate as a major component of the upscale gourmet tourism industry of the city (Carvalho, 2022). Chocolate's inclusion into Portuguese cuisine shows a rich cultural and historical legacy shaped by colonial trade and changing cooking techniques. Although there are few references to its historical use, its importance in the local food scene has evolved over time, which helps Lisbon appeal more generally as a gourmet destination (Dias, 2025). The emergence of handcrafted chocolatiers and environmentally friendly chocolate firms is altering the gastronomic scene of the city and attracting both locals and visitors seeking sophisticated and moral chocolate products.
Lisbon's emphasis on food tourism along with environmental initiatives has helped it to become a well-known gastronomy destination. Its tourism appeal is improved by the way history and contemporary gastronomic innovations are combined to provide guests an interesting gastronomic experience (Mendes et al., 2021).

Following Lisbon's long-term tourism development plan, the city has been physically arranged into several themed development poles, each in line with certain tourism products and identification markers (Roland Berger, 2019). These poles are strategic frameworks reflecting Lisbon's own mix of culture, cuisine, creativity, and lifestyle rather than merely physical differences. They provide a geographical control of tourism experiences, therefore

matching visitor flows with the symbolic capital and socioeconomic possibilities of every district.

Table 1 presents these development poles together with related tourism products, therefore providing a disciplined view of how Lisbon directs various visitor interests over the topography of the city. For the gourmet market especially, this system highlights lifestyle and local authenticity in places like Campo de Ourique and Príncipe Real while putting gastronomy and shopping in the core of both Baixa–Chiado and Belém–Alcântara.

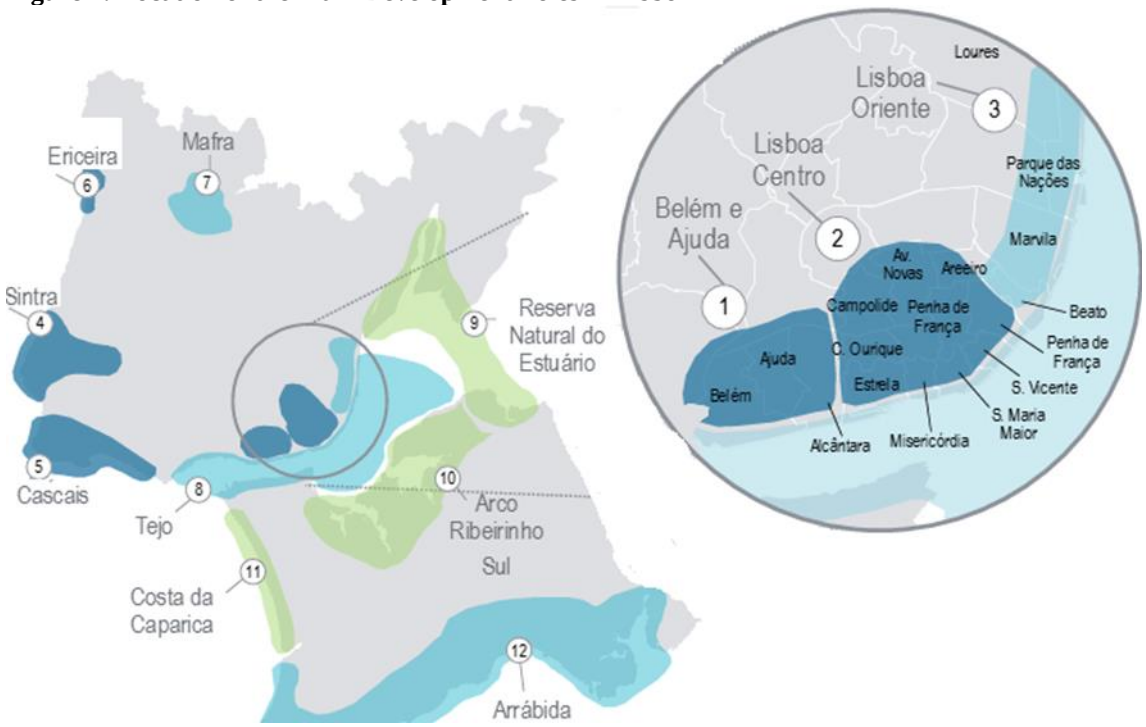
This spatial logic supports the notion that luxury products such as sustainable chocolate can be territorial statements of identity and culture as well as culinary ones. Moreover, the strategy plan acknowledges that current visitors especially younger generations are driven by visual narrative, social media interaction, and experiences thought to be "authentic," or "meaningful." These developments provide fresh opportunities for environmentally friendly chocolate companies combining ethical ideals, internet connection, product quality with immersive branding.
Finally, the research points out a major obstacle for sustainable tourism: the discrepancy between visitors' stated environmental concerns and their actual behaviour. Although more than seventy percent of visitors say they value sustainability, just seven percent choose sites based on this factor (Roland Berger, 2019). This exposes a chance for ethical food companies to be transformative and instructional, linking intention and behaviour by means of storytelling, openness, and community involvement.

Table 1. Development Poles and Strategic Tourism Products in Lisbon

Development Pole	Associated Tourism Products
Baixa–Chiado	Cultural Heritage, Shopping, Gastronomy
Avenida da Liberdade	Luxury Shopping, Urban Lifestyle
Belém–Alcântara	Innovation, Contemporary Culture, Gastronomy
Campo de Ourique	Local Lifestyle, Neighbourhood Experience, Sustainable Products
Príncipe Real	Creative Industries, Alternative Culture, Bio/Organic Consumption
Parque das Nações	Events, Business Tourism, Modern Infrastructure
Eastern Lisbon (Marvila)	Urban Regeneration, Local Production, Cultural Startups

Source: Adapted from Roland Berger (2019)

Figure 1: Location of the Main Development Poles in Lisbon



Source: Adapted from Roland Berger (2019, p. 157)

4.2 Market Analysis of Chocolate Shops in Lisbon

The chocolate shop sector in Lisbon shows a dynamic equilibrium between bigger, more organised companies and tiny, locally based firms. This dichotomy influences the kinds of customer experiences offered and also affects how companies market themselves.

Field studies found 20 chocolate-focused businesses spread across 8 different commercial brands in Lisbon. Among these, Arcádia - Casa de Chocolate is the most prevalent, running eight sites; Landeau comes next with four; and Godiva with three. By contrast, smaller companies including Bettina & Niccolò Corallo and As Marias com Chocolate usually operate one store, hence embracing a particular, handcrafted character.

About 70% of the companies are family-run and run from only one site. These stores usually emphasise artisanal quality, personal service, and close relationships with the local community. Their modest size, meanwhile, obviously restricts growth and leads to more basic manufacturing techniques and smaller seating capacities. Though number changes greatly from intimate environments with as few as four chairs to bigger ones hosting up to 60 guests, on average venues provide 21.3 seats. Larger ones sometimes mix retail with café

or bakery services, aiming to a broader audience including social events and casual visits; smaller ones emphasise exclusivity and a carefully selected product experience.

Family-run companies usually stress legacy, craftsmanship, and heritage in their operations. These ideals show themselves not only in product presentation but also in their daily activities. Opening hours differ greatly: some stores open as early as 8:30am to offer morning consumers seeking coffee and breakfast choices; others remain open until 11:00pm to service Lisbon's evening throng and visitors discovering the city at night. These various timetables show obvious awareness of urban consumer cycles and segment-based targeting. About 30% of chocolate stores run on franchise or multi-location brand policies. Often sacrificing artisanal uniqueness for operational efficiency and brand uniformity, these companies seek to reach a larger consumer base. Though they might not provide the same degree of handcrafted uniqueness, their size lets them guarantee consistency and broaden reach.

Concerning the items themselves, there is significant diversity in both range and placement. Only roughly a fourth of the stores concentrate just on chocolate selling chocolate bars, truffles, pralines, and tablets. These companies usually attract consumers who value purity, taste complexity, and craftsmanship. Most, though about 75% are hybrids combining chocolate sales with bakery or café services. This approach promotes return visits and satisfies consumers looking for a more comprehensive experience.

Chocolate selections also differ by target demographic and cocoa percentage. Among health-conscious consumers and purists, dark chocolates those with cocoa content between 70% and 100% are particularly well-liked. Conversely, consumers seeking a smoother, sweeter taste are drawn to milk and white chocolates with cocoa percentages beginning at 28%.

Often discussed in relation to cocoa origin are places like São Tomé and Príncipe, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Known for premium beans, these areas are particularly pushed by companies who respect narrative and sustainability. Still, sourcing openness differs: Some stores are quite open about where their chocolate comes from; others provide almost no information, suggesting uneven involvement with ethical and provenance-based marketing.

All things considered, operational diversity and a great variety of product strategies define the chocolate market in Lisbon. The industry provides a wide range of experiences from small, family-owned companies emphasising workmanship to bigger brands emphasising

scalability and recognisability. This background emphasises a chance for a sustainability-oriented chocolate store to establish itself by blending ethical sourcing, narrative, and product excellence directly addressing changing customer expectations and market voids.
Table 2 offers more information on the businesses cited, including operational models, product kinds, chocolate sources, and sustainability emphasis; Appendix A offers more detailed information.

Table 2: Overview of Chocolate Shops in Lisbon (based on detailed data from Appendix A)

Name	Business Type	Seats	Main Products	Cocoa Origin	Sustainability Focus
Bettina & Niccolò Corallo	Family-Owned	4	Artisanal Chocolate, Coffee	São Tomé and Príncipe, Others	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate	Family-Owned, Chain	10+	Chocolate with Port Wine	Ecuador, São Tomé, Tanzania	Yes
Landeau Chocolate	Family-Owned, Chain	12–60	Famous Chocolate Cake	Not Disclosed	No
Chocolataria Equador	Franchising	6	Dark Chocolates, Ganache	São Tomé	Yes
As Marias com Chocolate	Family-Owned	55	Truffles, Chocolate Salami	Belgium	Planned
Chocolate d'Odette	Artisanal, Independent	10	Truffles, Bonbons	São Tomé, Others	No
Godiva	Global Chain	None	Truffles, Pralines	Belgium	Yes
The Cacau Club	Boutique, Subscription-Based	Not Specified	Bean-to-Bar Chocolates, Tastings	Various Origins	Yes

Source: Compiled by the author based on primary research and market analysis.

4.3 Consumer Preferences and Engagement

Lisbon's consumer dynamics show a combination of conventional expectations and developing tastes influenced by world trends in sustainability and gastronomy.
Customers appreciate premium goods more and more, especially those stressing unusual flavour characteristics and workmanship. Shops providing unique pairings (such as chocolate with spices or local wines) or single-origin chocolates draw a tiny but devoted customer.
Price sensitivity still stands as a deterrent for general acceptance even if sustainability and ethical behaviour are increasingly of attention. Many customers are not ready to pay large premiums for sustainable goods, which emphasises the need of companies to strike a balance between ethics and economy.

Across the market, there is underuse of the integration of seminars, tastings, and instructional displays. These components could improve customer involvement, therefore strengthening bonds with the brand and encouraging loyalty.

4.4 Sustainability Practices: Insights and Strategic Implications

Reflecting both ongoing obstacles and new possibilities, sustainability is a major but inconsistently embraced issue in Lisbon's chocolate sector. About 40% of companies actively support sustainability by using fair-trade certification, biodegradable packaging, and ethical cocoa procurement. Still, the degree of integration ranges greatly. For most companies, sustainability stays a side issue of their operations, handled more as a marketing tool than as a basic value.

While some businesses lack openness, others clearly state their attempts at sustainability in customer involvement and branding. This disparity highlights a chance for a company to lead with a completely integrated sustainability story. Smaller companies are discouraged from more thorough sustainability pledges by high expenses related to ethical sourcing and sustainable packaging. Although they gain from scale, larger companies sometimes give cost-efficiency top priority, hence creating openings in the market for companies ready to commit in ethical behaviour.

The Lisbon chocolate market presents a multifaceted landscape shaped by diverse operational models, product offerings, and consumer engagement strategies. Despite the competitive nature of the industry, significant gaps remain in sustainability, transparency, and experiential value.

A sustainable chocolate business that prioritizes ethical sourcing, consumer education, and a fusion of local identity with global trends has the potential to transform industry standards. Navas et al. (2021, p. 13) note: *"Thus, the transparency of the information given in blockchain seems to be more positively related to obtaining sustainability knowledge, which can eventually influence the positive attitude and buying behavior of consumers in the long-term."* Such an establishment would not only meet current demand but also create new opportunities for meaningful engagement and sustainable growth.

Chapter 5. Methodological Approach

With an eye towards Lisbon especially, this chapter describes the study approach used to examine how sustainable practices are incorporated into the artisanal chocolate industry in Portugal. In-depth viewpoints from chocolatiers were sought by means of a qualitative research methodology, therefore revealing industry-wide sustainability issues and solutions. Emphasising their fit for examining difficult, context-specific problems like sustainability, consumer involvement, and market positioning, the chapter opens with defending the use of qualitative approaches.

Semi-structured interviews with Portuguese chocolatiers form part of the methodological framework, therefore enabling the gathering of many perspectives on ethical sourcing, manufacturing techniques, and branding tactics. To guarantee openness and dependability, specifics on the interview design, participant choosing, and recruiting procedure are given. Moreover, the chapter shows the application of the interviews, thereby addressing ethical issues including informed permission and data protection as well as scheduling difficulties. The last sections highlight important subjects including consumer preferences for sustainable chocolate, the function of branding, and the difficulties of drawing local business by means of the analysis of interview results. The conversation combines scholarly research to frame the findings and provides understanding of the strategic benefits of sustainability in handcrafted chocolate companies. This chapter provides the basis for knowing how sustainability could improve both company viability and market uniqueness in Lisbon's chocolate industry by tying theoretical viewpoints with pragmatic industry insights.

5.1 Qualitative Methodology

Especially pertinent for this study, qualitative research offers a thorough framework for investigating difficult, context-specific events. This approach enables a comprehensive study of how Portuguese chocolatiers incorporate sustainability into their operations, aligning with the objective of assessing the feasibility of creating a sustainable chocolate store in Lisbon. Moreover, it provides insights into how these methods affect consumer behaviour and help align corporate operations with the gourmet attractiveness of Lisbon. Hammarberg, Kirkman, and de Lacey (2016) emphasize that qualitative research is

particularly effective in contexts where social, ethical, and cultural factors are prominent, offering nuanced insights often missed by quantitative approaches.

This study aims to uncover potential synergies between sustainability and Lisbon's status as a cultural and gastronomic hub, recognizing that qualitative research, as Lim (2024) highlights, is particularly effective in exploring phenomena at the intersection of environmental, cultural, and social dimensions, making it a valuable method for understanding how sustainability can serve as a strategic differentiator in a competitive market like Lisbon.

By capturing the perspectives of chocolatiers, the study identifies approaches and challenges that contribute to both theoretical and practical insights for developing a sustainable business model. Semi-structured phone interviews with chocolatiers from across Portugal were conducted for data collection. Capturing variations in sustainability practices influenced by regional disparities in market conditions, customer preferences, and cultural contexts required this geographic diversity. These findings highlight how sustainability can be applied, adapted, and marketed successfully in different contexts, including Lisbon. Telephone interviews were selected for their logistical advantages, allowing for flexibility in scheduling and participation while preserving the depth of inquiry necessary to meet the study's objectives. Lim (2024) underscores that remote interviews are a practical and flexible way to access diverse perspectives without compromising the richness of the data.

The interview guide was carefully designed to address the study's core themes, including sustainable sourcing processes, environmentally friendly manufacturing methods, consumer education, and the role of chocolate shops as educational spaces. By focusing on these areas, the guide ensured that the data collected directly contributed to evaluating a viable business strategy in Lisbon. Hammarberg et al. (2016) point out that semi-structured interviews help researchers to cover pre-selected subjects while allowing new ideas and themes to surface throughout the talk, so balancing structure and flexibility.

The information was examined to spot trends and themes running across individuals' answers. This analytical approach allowed the study to connect individual narratives to broader trends relevant to the research objectives. Lim (2024) emphasizes the importance of rigorous data analysis to ensure that findings are rooted in participants' perspectives while addressing broader research questions. By cross-referencing data from multiple participants, the study validated its findings and gained a robust understanding of shared opportunities and challenges in implementing sustainable practices. Reflexivity further enhanced the

study's credibility, as the researcher critically evaluated their influence on data interpretation, ensuring transparency and reducing potential bias (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

Though its limited generalisability makes qualitative research unpopular at times, its strength is in generating in-depth, context-specific insights. Including chocolatiers from across Portugal enriched the study by capturing a wide range of practices and perspectives. These findings not only clarify sustainability in the chocolate sector but also inform practical strategies tailored to Lisbon's cultural and economic context. Hammarberg et al. (2016) argue that qualitative research is particularly effective in exploring niche industries, offering insights that guide both scholarly discussion and practical applications.

The results of this investigation are directly tied to the development of a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon. By connecting sustainability to consumer education, ethical corporate practices, and the city's cultural identity, the study provides a roadmap for integrating environmental and social responsibility into a viable business model. These findings also contribute to broader academic discussions on how niche industries can leverage sustainability as both a strategic advantage and a value proposition in competitive markets.

5.2 Methodological Procedures: Interview Design and Implementation

To examine the Portuguese artisanal chocolate market, this study mostly used semi-structured interviews as its qualitative research technique. Along with evaluating the viability of a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon, the interviews sought to investigate manufacturing processes, environmental standards, corporate operations, and consumer behaviour. There were five sections to the interview guide covering:

1. Production Techniques and Cocoa's Origin – Analysed supplier selection, production techniques, and sourcing policies to differentiate between industrial producers and bean-to-bar artists. Cocoa's origin was also taken under close examination.
2. Sustainable Practices and Fair Trade – Examined certifications, ethical sourcing, waste reduction projects, and biodegradable packaging in sustainable practices and fair trade.

3. Establishing and Managing a Chocolate Shop – Starting and running a chocolate shop looked at supply chain management, scalability, budgetary restrictions, and logistical issues.
4. Consumer Behaviour and Market Orientation – Investigated consumer preferences, opinions of sustainability, ethical consumerism, and brand positioning strategies in order of consumer behaviour and market orientation.
5. General Description of the Interviewees – Gathered background information including years of experience, business model, and company size to guarantee consistency among several chocolate companies.

This methodical approach guaranteed thorough data collection and preserved freedom to investigate newly developing ideas (Bryman, 2016).

To guarantee representation over several business models, firm sizes, and regional settings, a purposive sample technique was used (Kvale, 1996). Ten interviewees total made up the last sample, divided as follows:

Table 3: Sample of Interviewees Categorised by Business Model.

Interviewee	Business Profile*
Interviewee 1	Artisanal enterprise
Interviewee 2	Artisanal enterprise
Interviewee 3	Artisanal enterprise
Interviewee 4	Artisanal enterprise
Interviewee 5	Hybrid operation
Interviewee 6	Hybrid operation
Interviewee 7	Hybrid operation
Interviewee 8	Hybrid operation
Interviewee 9	Industrial brand
Interviewee 10	Industrial brand

* Artisanal enterprises (SSP): Small-scale chocolatiers focusing on craftsmanship, direct trade, and ethical sourcing.
Hybrid operations (MSC): Businesses combining artisanal techniques with scalable production to serve niche and corporate markets.
Industrial brands (LSP): Large-scale manufacturers prioritising certifications, efficiency, and international market reach.

Source: Compiled by the author based on primary research (interviews).

Email invites were used to find participants, therefore guaranteeing a professional and open approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Initial response rates were poor, nevertheless,

because of seasonal production restrictions, which called for several follow-ups by email and phone call. Flexible schedule was used to maximise involvement: some interviews took place evenings and weekends (Patton, 2015).
Three industry experts participated in a pilot study to confirm the logical flow and simplicity of the questions:

1. One handcrafted chocolatier (SSP) focused on direct trade sourcing and bean-to-bar manufacturing.
2. One medium-sized chocolatier (MSC) operated a hybrid business strategy, combining scalable manufacturing with handcrafted workmanship.
3. One manager of a retail chocolate shop (LSP) concentrated on verified cocoa procurement and extensive market distribution.

The pilot research revealed the need for numerous improvements:

1. Definition of technical terms concerning certifications and ethical branding.
2. Rearranging the sequence of questions to ensure logical transitions (Seidman, 2006).
3. Increase of sustainability-related issues, including direct trade and consumer perception of biodegradable packaging.

Between November 24, 2024, and January 3, 2025 a period of great seasonal demand interviews were conducted, requiring flexibility in scheduling. Despite delayed responses (40%) and denied invitations (30%), 100% of scheduled interviews were successfully completed, necessitating multiple follow-ups.

5.3 Results and Discussion

Interviews with local chocolatiers and experts in Lisbon's chocolate industry show a market that is still taking form and somewhat varied. Though mass-market brands still rule shelves, there is increasing room for small-scale and artisanal producers who attract customers looking for ethical ideals and original tastes. The market is made up of a mix of tiny family firms, mid-sized producers balancing tradition and volume, and larger companies with recognised brands and worldwide distribution.
One important element affecting how these companies run is their location. Stores located

in very tourist areas usually emphasise premium packaging, guided tastings, and narratives meant to attract foreign visitors. By contrast, firms located in more residential regions give local consumers first priority and strive for affordability. Some people mix both strategies by looking at fresh retail formats including pop-up stores, internet sales, and partnerships with duty-free or gourmet businesses to extend their reach.

Consumer tastes in Lisbon show an intriguing contradiction. Most local customers still base their decisions mostly on flavour, price, and brand familiarity even as tourists and expats search for ethical signals like organic or Fairtrade labelling. Interviews indicate that almost half of the participants expressed sustainability concern and roughly 40% noticed certificates; for majority, however, these elements were not conclusive. Many companies have so used a hybrid approach to mix ethical behaviour with popular appeal. Part of a rising collection of engagement tools are in-store activities including chocolate tastings and seminars, usually meant to inform consumers about the ethical side of manufacturing. Though obvious, sustainability projects are still second in many purchase choices. Among visitors, though, demand for ethically made chocolate is far greater, providing a potential market for more premium products.
That said, for these companies being sustainable is not simple. Especially for smaller manufacturers, the expenses of organic components, biodegradable packaging, and certifications might be somewhat significant. In Portugal, access to reasonably priced eco-friendly packaging is still restricted; some chocolatiers said proving traceability or getting formal certification might be challenging and expensive. Many people therefore choose direct trade ties over others since they value personal interaction with cocoa farmers to guarantee ethical sourcing without additional bureaucracy.

Usually from Ghana, São Tomé, Ecuador, Peru, or Madagascar, most chocolate producers in Lisbon use imported cocoa. Relying on international supply chains brings its own difficulties price changes, shipping delays, and regulatory changes. Though this is uncommon because of the large first investment and demand for specialised staff, some companies have chosen bean-to-bar manufacturing, overseeing the whole process from cocoa bean to end product. Most still utilise pre-tempered couverture chocolate to strike a compromise between efficiency and a handmade sensation.
Demand increases during significant holidays like Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day,

which drives chocolatiers to provide unique gift packages, premium packaging, or limited-edition lines. Particularly via experiences like guided tastings or the use of local products such as Port wine or regional citrus fruits that link chocolate to Portuguese cultural identity, culinary tourism has become a supplementary income in recent years.
Often, rent and administrative expenses drive manufacturers in busy locations to seek different retail techniques. Many are reducing risk while keeping visibility by switching to internet sales, pop-up formats, or alliances with reputable gourmet shops. Simultaneously, taxes are still a major obstacle: Portugal's VAT on chocolate is 23%, which increases ultimate costs and could harm firms seeking to compete with more affordable, less sustainable options.
Although about 45% of interviewees claimed they would pay extra for ethical items, many companies discover that most local customers are still somewhat price-sensitive. Producers therefore frequently seek to provide value by means of narrative, unique design, or engaging in-store experiences that support the more price. Tourists, who are more likely to spend on ethical or locally made products, are a more flexible group; nonetheless, seasonal income variation is still a problem.
Sustainability plans differ greatly. While some companies seek official accreditation, others emphasise keeping tight ties with small-scale cocoa producers. Though their price remains a hurdle, biodegradable packaging and waste reduction are growingly popular. Nearly all interviewees mentioned the absence of financial assistance from state institutions, which complicates changes towards more environmentally friendly practices for smaller players.
From an operational standpoint, businesses change in various ways. Though this affects scalability, small producers usually prefer manual techniques that let them have more control over quality and components. Though still adhering to ethical sourcing policies, bigger corporations tend to automate some of the process. Personalization such as bespoke gift boxes or event-specific items has emerged as yet another method to vary revenue and enhance brand recognition.
One of the major challenges still is access to funds. Establishing bean-to-bar infrastructure, procuring sustainable cocoa, and maintaining certification standards calls for money that is not always readily available. Many companies without government assistance depend on alliances with suppliers, distributors, or the tourism industry to remain competitive. From inexpensive chocolates to luxury, single-origin lines, providing a fair product mix is a typical approach to satisfy the demands of various consumer profiles.

Running a sustainable chocolate business in Lisbon, therefore, requires a careful balancing act. It calls for strong values, innovative business ideas, and the capacity to adjust to local and global consumer demands. Although taxes, supply chain concerns, and a lack of incentives continue to be significant obstacles, brands that can mix ethical sourcing, excellent quality, and genuine customer involvement clearly have promise. Those who can combine sustainability with cultural value and clever management will be best positioned to guide Lisbon's chocolate scene into the future as the market changes.

5.3.1 Growing Interest in Sustainable Chocolate

Driven by changing customer tastes and industrial realities, the artisanal chocolate business is seeing a major turn towards sustainability. Interview insights exposed that chocolatiers regard sustainability as both an operational need and a strategic distinction. Respondents underlined that including sustainable practices improves business reputation, draws environmentally sensitive customers, and builds long-term brand loyalty. These points of view coincide with research by Bello-Bravo et al. (2022), which show that achieving customer expectations while lowering environmental effect depends on sustainable sourcing methods being absolutely important.

Regarding the adoption of sustainability practices, interviews revealed an increasing focus on certifications such as Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance. These certifications, frequently employed by medium- and large-scale producers, were seen as essential for appealing to international markets and ensuring transparency in sourcing. One interviewee from a medium-sized company observed, "Our customers trust us because they see the certifications, and it reassures them about our values." Chatterjee et al. (2021) find that ethical certifications greatly affect consumer willingness to pay price premiums for sustainable items, therefore supporting this result.

In contrast, small-scale producers emphasized grassroots practices, such as using biodegradable packaging and repurposing cocoa husks. These actions, while less formalized than certifications, resonated strongly with local consumers and reinforced community connections. This aligns with Seyfang and Haxeltine’s (2012) assertion that grassroots innovations foster deeper community engagement and consumer trust.

Over the previous ten years, many interviewees noted a clear rise in consumer awareness of sustainability. Younger consumers, who give environmental and social issues top priority

while buying chocolate, especially show this trend. One small-scale manufacturer claims, "Our customers often ask about the origin of our cocoa and how we support local farmers." Such questions mirror the results of Kashmanian (2017), who emphasizes supply chain openness as a key component for preserving customer confidence and guaranteeing the validity of environmental promises.

Moreover, several interviewees pointed out that demand for sustainable chocolate is driven in great part by consumer knowledge. Producer-organized tastings and seminars not only include consumers but also help them to better grasp the environmental initiatives underlined. This strategy reflects ideas from Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012), who underline the need for education in advancing grassroots sustainable practices.

Interviewees admitted the difficulties of implementing such policies, especially for smaller companies, even although sustainability is attracting more and more interest. High costs associated with certifications and the adoption of sustainable technologies often act as barriers. A large-scale producer remarked, "Certifications are expensive, but they are necessary for competing in global markets." Small-scale producers pointed out, on the other hand, that although affordable, grassroots methods call for a lot of time and work to apply. This duality captures the results of Bello-Bravo et al. (2022), who address the conflict in the chocolate sector between financial restrictions and sustainability targets.

The increasing customer awareness of sustainability presents companies with a significant opportunity to differentiate themselves in the competitive handmade chocolate industry. Chocolate stores can appeal to a broader customer base by adopting a hybrid strategy, combining grassroots methods for local engagement with certifications for global recognition.

This dual strategy, as Kashmanian (2017) highlights, not only ensures transparency and trust but also positions businesses as leaders in sustainable production.

Finally, the interviews and supporting data highlight the important part sustainability plays as a basic operating concept as well as a market differentiator. Successful integration of sustainable practices into their operations helps chocolatiers to profit from changing customer tastes and support a more ethical and ecologically friendly sector.

5.3.2 Profile of Specialty Chocolate Consumers

The profile of consumers of speciality chocolate exposes a dynamic and changing scene shaped by growing knowledge of sustainability, ethical issues, and quality differentiation. Academic insights combined with data from chocolatier interviews offers a strong grasp of the actions, tastes, and motives influencing this market niche. Operating both locally and internationally, artisan chocolatiers negotiate this complexity by customising their products to satisfy customer needs for transparency, sustainability, and luxury experiences.

Emphasising Sustainability and Ethical Behaviour Respondents to the interviews regularly said that consumers of speciality chocolate give sustainability and ethical sources top priority while making purchases. Particularly younger groups were found to be more ecologically sensitive and to be looking for openness on the source of cocoa and the methods used in its production. This aligns with research by Yue et al. (2020), which highlights that consumers increasingly favor sustainable product attributes, especially when these are accompanied by clear certification and traceability mechanisms.

Small-scale producers emphasized their reliance on direct trade relationships and grassroots sustainability efforts, such as using local suppliers and repurposing cocoa husks. These practices not only align with consumer expectations but also reinforce brand identity and community connections. Larger producers as observed in the interviews use Fairtrade certificates to appeal to a worldwide audience, a trend that aligns with results by Scales (2020), which emphasises the need of ethical education in forming customer trust.

Those who enjoy speciality chocolate have a taste for premium, distinctive flavours that mirror producer craftsmanship. Respondents said that their clients often ask about the history of the brand, the manufacturing process, and the sources of chocolate. As one artisanal chocolatier (SSP) observed, "Consumers are buying an experience rather than just chocolate."

This remark is supported by Karaman and Girgin (2021), who show that consumers are drawn to local goods that mix quality with a real story. Storytelling becomes a vital tool for small-scale chocolatiers (SSPs) seeking uniqueness and connection since it helps them stand out from the others. This is especially pertinent in specialist sectors, where loyalty is

perceived to be developed by personal interaction with consumers through tastings and seminars.

Concerning price Sensitivity vs. Value Perception, while specialty chocolate consumers are willing to pay a premium for sustainable and ethically sourced products, the interviews revealed a tension between price sensitivity and perceived value. Larger producers emphasized the need for competitive pricing to appeal to broader markets, whereas smaller chocolatiers pointed out that their customers are often more understanding of higher price points due to the perceived authenticity and ethical practices involved.

This duality is echoed by Yue et al. (2020), who argue that consumer willingness to pay depends heavily on clear communication of product benefits. Chocolatiers noted that providing transparency and educating consumers about the complexities of sustainable production helps justify higher prices and build trust.

Younger, ecologically conscious consumers are reshining the speciality chocolate business by pushing fresh trends and branding and customer interaction opportunities. Respondents underlined that this group appreciates not only environmental aspects but also experience ones such distinctive packaging, seasonal products, and chances to interact personally with manufacturers. This development points to chances for chocolatiers to be creative in consumer interaction techniques and branding.

Local market consumers clearly favour goods that capture their cultural and geographical identity. Small-scale chocolatiers, who stressed their use of locally grown foods and classic recipes to appeal to their local markets, especially recognised this. This is consistent with research by Hoskins et al. (2020), which show that localised marketing approaches help to create consumer loyalty and confidence.

Chocolatiers find it difficult to really interact with their target market despite these chances. Among the main challenges listed were high running expenses, inadequate marketing tools, and constant innovation required. Particularly smaller companies find it difficult to strike a balance between sustainability initiatives and profitability, a conflict also observed in Fischer et al. (2020), who emphasise the need for strategic planning in negotiating these conflicting goals.

Moreover, respondents emphasized that consumer education remains a critical barrier. Although sustainability is becoming more and more important, many customers still lack a thorough knowledge of the methods and values underpinning ethical chocolate manufacture. Chocolatiers advised that improved efforts in direct involvement, openness, and storytelling should help close this disparity.

Knowing the profile of speciality chocolate buyers helps a sustainable chocolate business in Lisbon base strategic decisions. Through matching offers to consumer priorities such as sustainability, quality, and authenticity the store can establish itself as a leader in the handcrafted chocolate industry. Building loyalty and uniqueness in a competitive market will depend critically on including features including customised customer experiences, narrative, and community involvement.

Furthermore, using hybrid approaches combining certifications with localised practices will appeal to consumers looking for value-driven goods as well as those with environmental consciousness. Clear communication of product benefits and sustainability initiatives can improve customer trust and willingness to pay a premium, therefore reinforcing the shop's position in the market as noted by González-Rodríguez et al. (2020).
The foundation of effective operations in the speciality chocolate industry is clearly consumer preferences and behaviours, which this study emphasises. Through addressing these insights, chocolatiers can negotiate market constraints and seize chances for development and creativity.

5.3.3 Role of Sustainable Chocolate Shops as Educational Spaces

Sustainable chocolate shops hold a dual function as both retail outlets and educational platforms, bridging the gap between sustainability narratives and consumer awareness. The interviews underscored that chocolatiers leverage their spaces to actively inform customers about ethical sourcing, environmental practices, and the social impact of their operations. These strategies create a more profound connection between consumers and brands, reinforcing loyalty and positioning these shops as leaders in sustainability advocacy.

Respondents frequently emphasised the use of workshops, tastings, and other interactive initiatives to educate consumers about sustainable practices. One small-scale chocolatier

highlighted, *"We organise workshops to show customers how sustainable sourcing works, and this has built a loyal customer base."* Similarly, medium-scale enterprises reported utilising in-store storytelling, such as signage and product labels, to convey the origins of their cocoa and their ethical commitments. Piligrimienė et al. (2020) suggest that such interactive approaches in retail are essential for engaging consumers and promoting sustainable consumption behaviours.

The interviews also revealed a focus on creating sensory experiences that integrate education and marketing. For example, some chocolatiers use single-origin tastings as a tool to explain the environmental and social implications of their sourcing methods. This aligns with Gatti et al. (2019), who highlight that sustainability education within businesses can effectively connect consumer behaviours with broader sustainability goals. Additionally, Rane et al. (2023) noted that such transparent communication enhances brand loyalty and consumer trust.

Chocolatiers leverage diverse methods to address sustainability knowledge gaps among their consumers. For urban and international clientele, who often have a baseline awareness of ethical sourcing, businesses refine their narratives to highlight unique practices, such as traceability and environmental innovation. Rural and price-sensitive customers, however, may require more foundational education to understand the value of sustainable chocolate.

As respondents explained, educational strategies tailored to different demographics can create lasting impacts. For example, medium-scale producers frequently pair digital campaigns with in-person workshops to maximise reach. These efforts reflect Permana and Ekowati (2024), who argue that sustainability marketing and ethical branding strengthen brand positioning and appeal across diverse markets.

While many chocolatiers recognised the benefits of educating consumers, the interviews also revealed significant challenges. Small-scale businesses often face resource constraints that limit their ability to invest in educational programs. As one respondent put it, *"We would love to host more events, but it's challenging to balance this with daily operations."* Collaborative efforts with local organisations and partnerships with governmental bodies were highlighted as potential solutions for overcoming these barriers.

The financial implications of sustainability education also extend to larger producers, who must invest in creating consistent and engaging narratives. However, respondents noted that these efforts often yield long-term benefits in consumer loyalty and competitive differentiation, validating Ebele et al.'s (2024) observations on the importance of aligning business practices with consumer expectations.

Sustainable chocolate shops in Lisbon have the potential to expand their educational role by partnering with schools, tourism organisations, and community initiatives. Several respondents suggested that such collaborations could amplify their message, reaching broader audiences and fostering deeper community ties. These findings reflect Pimdee (2020), who emphasizes the importance of community-based education in driving sustainable consumer behaviours.

Through storytelling, workshops, and hands-on engagement, sustainable chocolate shops can transform consumer perceptions, turning their retail spaces into hubs for ethical advocacy. The interviews consistently highlighted that these efforts not only educate consumers but also elevate the value of the products and the brands behind them, creating a mutually beneficial relationship between businesses and their communities.

5.3.4 Commitment of Shops to Sustainable Practices

The commitment to sustainable practices remains a central pillar for many chocolate businesses, reflecting their adaptation to evolving consumer expectations and environmental regulations. Through the interviews, it was evident that sustainability practices varied significantly across scales and operational models. This diversity is consistent with findings in the literature, which emphasize that businesses adopt sustainability measures for multiple reasons, including regulatory compliance, financial incentives, and brand differentiation (Zhivkova, 2022).

Medium- and large-scale producers underlined how important certifications like Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance are to proving their adherence to global sustainability criteria. These certifications not only meet legal requirements but also help consumers who care about the environment to trust brands. One respondent stated, *"Certifications offer us the credibility needed to compete in global markets."* This aligns with Hajjar et al. (2019), who underline the role of certifications in balancing ethical practices with scalability.

Small-scale chocolatiers, however, often adopt grassroots solutions such as using local suppliers to minimize transportation emissions and implementing waste-reduction strategies like repurposing cocoa husks. As Royer and Simon (2023) note, such localized efforts can be equally impactful in reducing ecological footprints when integrated effectively.

Despite their clear advantages, these practices are not without challenges. The interviews highlighted that certifications often come with significant financial and logistical barriers. A large-scale producer remarked, "Sustainability certifications are essential, but the associated costs are steep and require a long-term investment." Similarly, small-scale producers noted the labor-intensive nature of implementing grassroots practices, which can strain their already limited resources.

El Bilali and Allahyari (2018) identify technological advancements as potential solutions to these challenges, particularly for small-scale producers looking to optimize their processes without compromising sustainability. Meanwhile, larger companies can leverage economies of scale to reduce the per-unit cost of certification, making sustainability more accessible.

Driving sustainable practices is highly influenced by consumer demand. Customers are giving openness first priority, according to interviewees, who also probe closely on sourcing, manufacturing, and packaging. One medium-sized chocolatier (MSC) noted, “Our consumers want to see the tangible impact of our efforts, whether through biodegradable packaging or direct trade sourcing.” This observation resonates with Khizerulla and Lavanya (2024), who stress the importance of visible sustainability measures, such as eco-friendly packaging, in building consumer trust.

5.3.5 Strengths of the Brand as a Concept

This section synthesizes findings from both interviews and academic insights to present a detailed understanding of how branding strengthens artisanal chocolatiers' positioning in the sustainable market.

In the handcrafted chocolate market, branding expresses ethical ideals, superior workmanship, and a dedication to sustainability rather than only a visual identification. Interview insights showed that respondents see branding as a multifarious tool for building consumer trust, improving market distinction, and creating emotional bonds with consumers.

Many respondents underlined the importance of sustainability in building strong brand identities, especially in specialised sectors where consumers give ethical behaviour more and more top priority. Key components of the value of their brand, producers stress openness in sourcing and traceability. This is in line with the results of Perez et al. (2020), who underline the need of sustainability and authenticity in fulfilling customer expectations for traceable chocolate products. Smaller producers especially pointed out that consumers looking for real links with the source of their product found great resonance in their narrative-based branding, which emphasises community involvement and ethical collaborations.

For 90% of respondents (including all SSPs and MSCs), ethical branding emerged as a core component of consumer loyalty. Producers frequently cited certifications such as Fairtrade as essential for building credibility in international markets, with 60% of interviewees (four MSCs and two LSPs) specifically mentioning the role of Fairtrade in reinforcing trust with consumers. However, grassroots efforts like supporting local communities or engaging in direct trade relationships were equally noted as methods for instilling authenticity. This aligns with Bakke et al. (2020) research, which demonstrates that ethical considerations can often outweigh price or taste for certain consumers, particularly those in the premium chocolate segment.

Interviewees also underlined the need of narrative as a tool for branding. One small-scale chocolatier (SSP) stated, “Our story is what makes us unique; it reflects who we are, the people we work with, and the communities we support.” Limongi et al. (2023), who contends that sustainability storytelling creates emotional connections that inspire consumer loyalty, finds resonance in such points of view since they go beyond merely reporting facts.

Often in congested marketplaces especially, respondents cited sustainability as a strategic differentiation. Crafty chocolatiers stressed how they included biodegradable packaging and other environmentally friendly techniques into their business philosophy. Michalski (2024) emphasises in consumer decision-making and brand positioning the increasing relevance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues, which refer to a set of criteria used to evaluate a company's commitment to sustainability, ethical business practices, and corporate responsibility, therefore supporting this observation.

The role of brand differentiation was particularly pronounced among small-scale producers. They relied heavily on personalized experiences, such as direct engagement with customers through workshops or tastings, to convey the sustainability values embedded in their brand.

This approach mirrors findings by Boegman (2024), which suggest that a strong brand image tied to sustainability and value creates long-term loyalty even in competitive industries.
Despite these strengths, seven interviewees (four SSPs, two MSCs, and one LSP) admitted that building and maintaining an ethical brand comes with challenges. Certificates can restrict smaller producers' capacity to enter larger markets, therefore affecting their competitiveness. Larger companies might encounter mistrust from consumers who doubt the veracity of their environmental claims. Balancing these challenges requires consistent and transparent communication, which Sajid et al. (2024) identify as critical for bridging the gap between brand image and consumer perception. Certificates can restrict smaller producers' capacity to enter larger markets, therefore affecting their competitiveness. Larger companies might encounter mistrust from consumers who doubt the veracity of their environmental claims. Balancing these challenges requires consistent and transparent communication, which Sajid et al. (2024) identify as critical for bridging the gap between brand image and consumer perception.
Opportunities to leverage branding for educational purposes also emerged as a common theme. Producers discussed the importance of consumer education in reinforcing the value of their ethical practices, an idea supported by Akbari et al. (2020), who highlight the potential of ethical narratives to not only inform but inspire customer loyalty.

5.3.6 Challenges: Attracting Local Customers

The results of the interviews exposed many difficulties artisanal chocolate makers had drawing local consumers. Even if ethical and sustainable chocolate is in more demand worldwide, many companies find it difficult to attract local customers who could give cost more importance than environmental impact. These observations coincide with research stressing that in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, price sensitivity still significantly affects customer buying behaviour (Mamuaya, 2024).

Many of the interviewees pointed out that consumers sometimes regard sustainably made chocolate as a luxury good, which restricts its availability in mass-marketplaces. Certificates like Fairtrade and organic labels provide legitimacy, but they can increase manufacturing costs and, consequently, product prices. As one chocolatier stated, “While customers appreciate sustainable sourcing, many hesitate to pay a premium for it.”

This challenge aligns with Miškolci (2011), who found that customers are willing to pay for better and more ethical food alternatives only up to a certain price threshold.

Small-scale and medium-sized manufacturers especially must balance cost with environmental impact Small-scale (4 SSP) and medium-sized manufacturers (4 MSC) especially must balance cost with environmental impact. Several interviewees emphasized the importance of educating consumers about the true cost of environmentally friendly chocolate. However, as Akbar (2017) suggests, focusing on value rather than cost can help companies differentiate their products through niche marketing strategies.

Apart from pricing issues, fresh competitors in the market for handcrafted chocolate have to deal with issues of consumer trust and brand awareness. Particularly when faced with well-known industrial brands, many small enterprises find it difficult to carve out themselves in local marketplaces. Mwamba (2024) notes as main challenges faced by SMEs lack of financial resources, low consumer knowledge, and limitations in manufacturing scale-ability.

Some interviewees reported that strategic partnerships with restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty food stores have helped them reach a broader audience. A respondent from a small-scale operation stated, *"Our visibility improved significantly after collaborating with eco-conscious cafés that value sustainability."* These kinds of partnerships help companies to place themselves inside current customer networks instead of depending just on direct sales.

Interviewees also pointed up the lack of customer knowledge of sustainability in chocolate manufacture as another obstacle. Many consumers know nothing about how traditional cocoa growing contributes to environmental damage, child labour, and deforestation. Increasing customer trust depends critically on supply chain transparency, as Dontenville et al. (2022) observe. Strong brand loyalty can be developed by chocolatiers who freely communicate about their sustainability initiatives, farmer alliances, and procurement policies.

Offering tastings, seminars, and storytelling marketing has proved to be a successful approach for involving clients, according to interviewees. This approach aligns with Akbar (2017), who emphasizes the importance of personalized marketing strategies in niche industries.

Small chocolate businesses also face logistical challenges related to distribution. Without large-scale retail partnerships, many rely on online sales, farmer's markets, and specialty stores. However, ensuring efficient distribution can be costly. A respondent highlighted that *"shipping costs often deter customers from purchasing online, making it harder for small businesses to compete with supermarket brands."*

Mwamba (2024) suggests that developing localized supply chains and reducing dependency on external logistics services can improve competitiveness. This is particularly relevant for artisanal chocolatiers, who often have to balance supply chain sustainability with cost efficiency.

5.4 Final Discussion

The results of this study present a holistic view of the way sustainability is incorporated into the craftable chocolate industry. The supporting data and the interviews highlight how important sustainability is now for corporate strategy not a side issue. This paper offers a road map for companies trying to match their principles with modern customer expectations while keeping profitability by looking at sustainable sourcing, ethical branding, market positioning, and consumer involvement.

Chapter 6. SWOT Analysis and Strategies for Establishing a Sustainable Chocolate Shop

6.1 SWOT Analysis

Value of sustainable gastronomy projects depends on a strong awareness of Lisbon's contextual dynamics. As a possible host environment for ethical and luxury chocolate retail, this SWOT analysis reveals the main strengths, shortcomings, prospects, and hazards of the city. Instead than concentrating on a particular brand or business strategy, the framework looks at the larger urban, economic, and cultural scene in which environmentally conscious and handcrafted food businesses could function.

This diagnostic tool offers a disciplined basis based on the broad description of Lisbon shown in Chapter 4, insights from interviews with Portuguese chocolatiers in Chapter 5, and

strategic recommendations expressed in the Lisbon Tourism Strategy Plan 2020–2024. These sources taken together help to create a tailored strategic offer in the part that follows.

Table 4: SWOT Summary of a Sustainable Chocolate Shop in Lisbon

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Strong international positioning of Lisbon as a gastronomic destination • Demand for artisanal and sustainable food experiences • Synergy with third-wave coffee and craft food cultures • Cultural appreciation for authenticity and storytelling • Growth in consumer interest in environmentally responsible practices	• High rental costs in premium retail areas • Limited public awareness of bean-to-bar chocolate • Logistical constraints in central urban neighbourhoods • Full reliance on imported cocoa • Temperature sensitivity and lack of climate control infrastructure in older commercial spaces
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Rise in ethical and sustainable consumer preferences • Growth of luxury tourism and gourmet experiences • Expansion of e-commerce and digital storytelling • Integration of Portuguese ingredients and identity • Partnerships with hotels, restaurants, and concept stores	• Volatility in global cocoa prices and sourcing risks • Dominance of international premium brands • Limited local purchasing power and economic volatility • Regulatory pressures related to packaging and emissions • Seasonality of tourism and demand fluctuations

6.1.1 Strengths

Lisbon presents a rare and very beneficial convergence of institutional support, market acceptability and spatial identity that generates ideal conditions for the launch and growth of sustainable artisanal chocolate businesses. Lisbon's changing tourism profile and urban form as well as a more general European trend towards experiential consumption and environmental responsibility help to explain this advantage.

Officially among the six key pillars for Lisbon's tourism development are gastronomy and shopping (Roland Berger, 2019). These pillars are defined as essential component of the symbolic identity of the city and its international brand, not only in terms of their economic worth. More than 91% of guests participate in gastronomy-related activities and 76% actively search for real, locally produced items (Roland Berger). This makes gastronomy especially a significant factor. These numbers expose a strong match between the expectations of the main visitor profile and the underlying qualities of sustainable chocolate

(authenticity, workmanship, ethical sourcing), therefore transcending mere statistical metrics.

The strategic vision of the city emphasises the need of pushing goods and services that combine environmental responsibility, creativity, and identity (Roland Berger, 2019, p. 158). When made from Portuguese products and created using ethical, open techniques, artisanal chocolate directly meets institutional aspirations. Lisbon not only welcomes such goods but also actively promotes their introduction into a more general sustainable and culturally anchored travel scene.

Interviewed chocolatiers strengthen this link even more. Many said that chocolate appeals especially to foreign customers when it is presented as a cultural expression via ingredients like Port wine or Flor de Sal, or with packaging referencing Lisbon's azulejos, legendary trams or local aesthetics (Chapter 5). One chocolatier observed that for many visitors, the result acts as a "visual souvenir," a physical, consumable memento of the Lisbon trip. These revelations show that handmade chocolate is seen as a vehicle for memory, story, and cultural legitimacy rather than only as a gourmet good.

The spatial arrangement of Lisbon accentuates these chances. As the strategic report points out, areas like Campo de Ourique, Alcântara, and Príncipe Real are becoming lifestyle areas where ideas like sustainability, slow consumption, and creative production really appeal to both locals and guests (Roland Berger, 2019). These areas include substantial presence of boutique shops, rich cultural infrastructure, and pedestrian-oriented design ideal settings for premium products dependent on atmosphere, story, and direct encounter. Chocolatiers under interview underlined how putting up in these spaces improves not only visibility but also perceived validity.

Moreover, Lisbon's tourism strategy is gradually moving from mass visits to highly valuable, experience-driven sectors (Roland Berger, 2019). Travellers with more income and more attention to sustainability and cultural uniqueness are drawn to the city more and more. This psychographic profile fits exactly the customer base targeted by ethical chocolate companies: people who value social responsibility, place-based authenticity, and narrative in their buying habits. Several chocolatiers reported that these customers actively search for goods with fair-trade certification, eco-packaging, and clear linkages to the local context in addition to being ready to pay more (Chapter 5).

Lisbon also gains from a great degree of general visitor satisfaction; around 71% of visitors rate their experience 8 or above (Roland Berger, 2019). Small-scale producers looking to fit

into the premium offer of the city will find a useful basis from this reputational capital. Ethical chocolate companies especially those able to express Lisbon's ideals via taste, form, and narrative are well suited to turn tourist attention into ongoing demand.

Synergies with other trends of sustainable consumerism help to emphasise this point even more. Cross-sector collaborations find rich footing in the city's active third-wave coffee culture a movement that values coffee as an artisanal product, with emphasis on bean origin, ethical sourcing, and manual brewing alongside the organic food movement and the growth of concept retail. Interviewed chocolatiers noted that co-location and co-branding techniques help them to access targeted, environmentally sensitive audiences while optimising exposure and shared values. They reported successful partnerships with cafés, eco-grocers, and boutique hotels.

For ethical chocolate businesses, the confluence of Lisbon's strategic direction, urban ecology, and visitor expectations offers an extraordinary setting. Together with its architectural beauty, small walkability, and lifestyle-driven consumer zones, the city's clear emphasis on authenticity, innovation, and sustainability not only creates a passive atmosphere but also actively enabler of ethical gastronomy. Chocolatiers who really connect with Lisbon's ecological aspirations and character are not only welcomed; they also have structural benefit.

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6.1.2 Weaknesses

Lisbon offers various structural and systemic constraints that can impede the profitability and scalability of sustainable chocolate businesses even if it is a highly sought-after premium gourmet destination. To grasp the limits of the context, these shortcomings which are related to urban infrastructure, commercial real estate dynamics, consumer behaviour, and logistical conditions that have to be seriously addressed.
One of the most urgent problems is the too expensive leasing price for prime real estate. The strategic plan states that Lisbon's most appealing retail areas including Avenida da Liberdade, Chiado and Baixa concentrate the city's premium shopping offer and are targeted for additional development as shopping venues for high-spending foreign visitors. But this concentration also drives up rental rates, which makes independent, environmentally conscious companies unable to enter the market. Interviews with chocolate makers covered in Chapter 5 often focused on the difficulty of locating store locations that strike a mix between foot traffic and cost. The lack of middle ground between tourist-saturated high-rent zones and periphery communities with limited visibility caused great anxiety among many. The restricted availability of commercial storage and delivery facilities aggravates this scenario particularly in historic areas where much of the premium retail activity is found. For chocolate companies that rely on exact environmental control during storage and

transportation, Lisbon's small streets, architectural limitations, and limited loading zones provide great challenges. Many chocolate makers pointed out that delivery plans had to be changed to avoid road congestion and that frequent, small-batch deliveries are usually required because of a lack of on-site storage capacity an approach that increases operational expenses and limits expansion. For temperature-sensitive goods like chocolate, which depends on climate-controlled logistics to preserve product quality all year long especially during Lisbon's hot and muggy summers this is extremely important. Portugal's exclusive reliance on imported cocoa adds still another restriction since the nation lacks domestic cocoa growing potential. This dependence exposes chocolate producers to fluctuating worldwide cocoa markets and raises their vulnerability to supply chain interruptions, geopolitical uncertainty, and shocks linked to climate change in areas of production. Interviewed chocolatiers found that although many want direct trade with ethical suppliers, the expenses of fair-trade certification and the vagaries of international transportation often force concessions. Furthermore, the strategic plan of the city lacks particular institutional support or infrastructure for importing or storing temperature-sensitive, perishable gourmet products an error that disproportionately influences specialised sectors like bean-to-bar chocolate.

From the demand side, Lisbon still shows poor consumer knowledge about bean-to-bar chocolate. While the strategic plan shows increasing visitor interest in sustainability and authenticity, the same cannot yet be said of the larger local customer base. Many interviewers claim that Portuguese consumers especially those outside the luxury market are not often aware of the variations between mass-produced and handcrafted chocolate. This lack of market literacy hinders the change towards ethical consumption and generates obstacles to pricing justification. Although foreign visitors might actively search for locally inspired and environmentally friendly goods, the local consumer base stays more conservative in their buying patterns, therefore restricting year-round demand for expensive, low-volume chocolate products.

Lisbon's climate adds still another operational flaw. The hot summers and changing humidity of the city seriously jeopardise the preservation of handcrafted chocolate. Interviewees often mentioned problems with chocolate blooming, melting during transportation, or degrading in texture from poor in-store temperature management. Installing refrigeration systems and keeping ideal temperature across supply chains greatly raises overheads yet such infrastructure is sometimes lacking in Lisbon's older retail buildings. Lisbon's urban design

and building type help to accentuate these environmental limitations, which are not unique for the city.
Finally, the institutional speech of Lisbon does not match the actual help accessible to small-scale sustainable producers. Although the tourism plan of the city emphasises innovation, identity, and sustainability as strategic objectives (Roland Berger, 2019), these values are not matched with concrete tools such as subsidies, logistical support or advertising platforms for newly founded ethical businesses in the food industry. Interviewed chocolatiers voiced doubts about the availability of municipal support systems, usually pointing up the bureaucratic difficulty in certifying sustainable practices or securing creative financing. Overall, Lisbon offers a convincing setting for the symbolic and cultural positioning of sustainable chocolate, but it is also marked by major constraints on viability. These comprise exorbitant retail rents, logistical challenges, infrastructure shortcomings, import reliance, low customer knowledge, and inadequate institutional facilitation. Any thorough knowledge of Lisbon's fit as a hub for ethical chocolate must consider not just its strategic advantages but also these ingrained restrictions influencing everyday operations and long-term viability.

6.1.3 Opportunities

Lisbon finds itself at the junction of multiple positive structural and behavioural factors that produce a specifically conducive environment for the expansion of sustainable, premium chocolate businesses. These possibilities arise from deeper changes in the city's tourist model, spatial dynamics, and changing expectations of both local consumers and foreign visitors, not only from current market need.
One of the most important prospects is based on the strategic vision expressed by the institutional agenda of the city. Shopping and gastronomy are not only financial activities in Lisbon; they are also portrayed as defining elements of the visitor experience, major means of conveying authenticity, creativity, and identity (Roland Berger, 2019). Low-impact travel, sustainable development, and locally produced goods reflecting Lisbon's identity and values now take front stage in the city's strategic agenda. When created using transparent, traceable, handcrafted techniques, ethical chocolate fits very well in this vision especially when it includes Portuguese ingredients and cultural allusions into its offer.
The consumer scene of Lisbon presents likewise great strategic possibilities. Data shows that 76% of travellers actively search for real local goods and that, with 91% involvement levels, cuisine is still the most interactive activity among visitors (Roland Berger, 2019).

Interviewed chocolatiers have found that their most successful product lines for example, flavour profiles influenced by Port wine, Pastel de Nata or regional spices, and packaging reflecting the visual character of the city respond immediately to this desire. These goods offer visitors a means to carry Lisbon home in sensory and symbolic form, therefore serving not just as food mementos but also as cultural tales (Chapter 5).
The growing attraction of Lisbon among more affluent visitors improves this possibility even further. The city is drawing more and more people with more money to spend, a taste for boutique experiences, and more consciousness of environmental ideals. 2019: Roland Berger. These guests are more inclined to interact with goods that convey ethical intent, origin transparency and handwork. Interviewed chocolatiers agreed that such customers not only value certified sourcing and biodegradable packaging but also are ready to pay premium pricing provided the story is appealing and the experience real (Chapter 5).
Lisbon's spatial and retail ecology offers still another path of possibilities. Districts like Campo de Ourique, Alcântara and Príncipe Real have grown rich ground for alternative business combining walkability, cultural capital and consumer profiles open to artisanal, sustainable and experiential products (Roland Berger, 2019.). Interviewees cited the benefits of working in mixed-use areas, where lifestyle shopping, cafés, and cultural venues combine to create foot circulation and community involvement. These zones let chocolatiers create loyal, value-driven customers instead of navigating the unsustainable competition of centralised mass-tourism venues.
Additionally representing growing boundaries are technology and digital interaction. The tourist plan of the city promotes the inclusion into the visitor trip of narrative, identity, and creativity (Roland Berger 2019). Chocolatiers who embrace digital techniques such QR-coded storytelling, ethical sourcing transparency platforms, and immersive brand tales can reach outside the actual store environment. Not only diversify income sources but also help to reduce seasonality risks by several respondents reporting successful activities in online retail, alliances with boutique hotels and well chosen subscription boxes (Chapter 5).
The cultural economy of Lisbon offers more help. There is institutional interest in supporting goods that reflect and support Lisbon's character as intangible heritage and cuisine as cultural expression take the stage. Embedding Portuguese symbols, tastes, and visual indicators into their goods helps chocolatiers profit from this cultural dynamic and present themselves as stewards of modern, sustainable legacy.
At last, the development of cross-sector alliances offers rich ground for cooperation.

Working with cafés, concept stores, eco-markets and hospitality venues, chocolatiers said they had great multi-channel experiences that boost visibility and support trust among consumers focused on sustainability (Chapter 5). These alliances not only reduce marketing expenses and share risk but also ground the product in a larger ethical consumer environment.

6.1.4 Threats

Though Lisbon's institutional and cultural fit with sustainable food practices, various structural challenges compromise the viability and stability of ethical chocolate businesses. These hazards affect local as well as macro levels, covering urban economic systems, world commodities markets, and changing travel and consumption trends. From all the players engaged in Lisbon's craft gastronomy, they demand close observation and adaptive capacity. The volatility of world cocoa prices, which are progressively impacted by climate change, geopolitical uncertainty, and rising international demand for certified cocoa, presents one of the most major concerns. Without domestic cocoa output, Portugal depends entirely on imports. Interviewed chocolatiers verified that, particularly for small-scale companies depending on fair-trade or organic supply chains, changes in cocoa prices directly affect sourcing costs and profit margins. Though fundamental to their brand identity, these ethical sourcing policies increase sensitivity to procurement restrictions and financial shocks (Chapter 5).

The concentration of commercial real estate among upscale foreign businesses in Lisbon's most prominent retail areas adds still another concern. Roland Berger (2019) claims that the increase in leasing prices especially in core areas like Chiado, Avenida da Liberdade and Baixa has displaced many independent producers, therefore supporting market dominance by bigger companies. This retail stratification reduces visibility and consumer access, thereby limiting access to prime sites for developing sustainable businesses and so increasing inequality. With real effects on foot traffic and income, chocolatiers interviewed pointed out that retail competition from multinational chains often drives local makers into less well-known or less visited sites (Chapter 5).

Seasonality in Lisbon's tourism strategy poses still another fundamental risk. The city has made progress towards year-round tourism, although consumption patterns remain focused between March and October with notable winter downturns. Roland Berger (2019) notes

this seasonality as a weakness, especially for companies whose income mostly comes from visitor numbers. Chocolatiers stated that demand for premium chocolate declines significantly during the off-season, therefore stressing cash flow and inventory control. Those lacking varied sales channels such as wholesale alliances or e-commerce are particularly vulnerable to these cyclical reductions (Chapter 5).

Limited local buying power in regard to luxury or ethically priced goods presents another ongoing difficulty. Lisbon draws high-spending visitors, while the local populace shows more frugal buying patterns, usually giving price top priority over sustainability or workmanship. Many local consumers still lack knowledge of bean-to-bar ideas or ethical sourcing policies, according to interviewed chocolatiers, which calls for continuous, resource-intensive, uncertain return-oriented training initiatives (Chapter 5). This reduces the ethical segment's growth potential and could cause over-reliance on outside markets.

Furthermore, Lisbon's strict legal system especially with regard to food safety rules and environmental standards while admirable in goal, costs micro-enterprises disproportionately. Older commercial units, particularly those without modern ventilation or energy efficiency, find it costly to meet requirements for waste management, biodegradable packaging, allergy control and refrigerated equipment. Chocolatiers complained about challenges in modifying heritage buildings to satisfy environmental criteria without running unsustainable overheads. Although Lisbon's environmental rules follow EU best standards, Roland Berger (2019) notes that they are sometimes created with bigger operators in mind and neglect the constraints of smaller artisan companies.

At last, growing prospects are nevertheless limited by increased market competitiveness from both national and foreign players. Along with foreign companies with well-established distribution systems and brand equity, the Lisbon chocolate market features very identifiable Portuguese brands with several retail stores. Independent chocolatiers must overcome great obstacles to entrance in terms of operational scale and marketing reach. Interviewees noted that ethical branding by itself is often inadequate to grab market share in the absence of comparable visibility or promotional capacity. They described the difficulty to compete with companies offering standardised but visually appealing products at lower prices (Chapter 5; Market Overview).

These hazards taken together create a complicated terrain of structural disadvantage and outside unpredictability. Lisbon provides cultural, symbolic, and institutional capital for ethical chocolate manufacture, but the surrounding ecosystem characterised by infrastructure

disparities, regulatory constraints and financial instability requires careful navigation. In this scenario, sustained success calls not just for production excellence but also strategic knowledge of these environmental pressures and resilience in face of systematic risk.

6.2 Strategies

The success of a sustainable chocolate store in Lisbon rests on a very localised and diversified approach that responds to the tourism flows, economic dynamics, and rising tendencies of ethical consumption of the city. The brand has to construct a strategic flagship site, develop a culturally grounded product range, welcome digital development, and implement concepts in environmental and community-based sustainability. Lisbon's commercial real estate costs, seasonal tourism fluctuations, and logistical challenges connected with temperature-sensitive items also have to be faced simultaneously with significant hurdles highlighted in the SWOT analysis. This strategy guarantees long-term profitability and aims to establish the brand as a benchmark for ethical luxury products in the market.

Following significant site research, the Campo de Ourique region proved to be the ideal location for the flagship store. Campo de Ourique offers a sophisticated yet accessible space unlike more commercialised areas like Chiado or Avenida da Liberdade where global luxury labels rule and rentals are expensive. Frequent the neighbourhood are rich locals, foreigners, food-conscious visitors seeking distinctive and premium experiences above global norm. Given its strong gastronomic character typified by independent restaurants, artisan bakeries, and the well-known Mercado de Campo de Ourique the district naturally supports specialised businesses focussing on quality and authenticity. Moreover, it offers constant foot traffic all year long, therefore reducing reliance on seasonal visitor flows a big disadvantage for businesses in places like Baixa or Belém.

To reach consumers without incurring the costs of many retail locations, the company will construct seasonal pop-up stores at strategic places such Time Out Market and the duty-free area of Lisbon Airport. These satellite sites will expose more while maintaining the immersive experience of the main store, therefore servicing foreign guests as well as high-spending locals. This multi-location strategy ensures that the Campo de Ourique flagship stays the centre of the company and creates many revenue streams.

From roasting to moulding, a totally transparent bean-to----bar microfactory housed inside

the main store will let customers view every stage of manufacturing, therefore improving the sensory experience supporting the authenticity and workmanship standards of the brand. Carefully positioned scent diffusers will attract people by distributing the aroma of freshly roasted chocolate across the surrounding streets. While interactive sampling stations let customers touch, smell, and taste ingredients at different production processes, augmented reality storytelling will be triggered by QR codes buried in packaging. These components inform consumers about ethical procurement, environmental impacts, and cultural roots, therefore strengthening openness. The inside of the shop will showcase Portuguese identity by means of local sustainable materials, natural lighting, and references to azulejos and traditional patterns, thereby combining modern design with handcrafted beauty.
The product approach will focus on creating a signature collection with strong local taste. Among the things will be a Pastel de Nata Chocolate Fusion bar, Madeira Rum Caramel Bonbons, Port Wine & Dark Chocolate Truffles. These goods will stress regional identity and gastronomic legacy, therefore bridging the gap between gastronomy and culture. Fresh ranges will be maintained by seasonal editions including São Martinho Chestnut Pralines or mint-infused Santo António bars. The company will also offer customised chocolate bars letting consumers select origin, tastes, and unusual inscriptions using 3D chocolate printing. This degree of adaptation improves the product and deepens emotional bond with the brand.
The brand philosophy revolves mostly on sustainability. Direct-trade agreements with São Tomé and Príncipe growers will help to guarantee ethical cocoa procurement, therefore guaranteeing fair work, environmental protection, and openness. With cocoa husks used for teas, cosmetics, or compost, a zero-waste approach will direct operations. Bulk customers will get discounts from a "Bring Your Own Box" scheme, therefore promoting reusable behaviours. The store will run on solar-powered electricity in line with Lisbon's aims for carbon neutrality by 2025; all packaging will be recyclable or compostable (Roland Berger, 2019.).

Digital development will increase revenues outside of the actual space. Virtual manufacturing tours and immersive storytelling will abound on the brand's web sites. Monthly special offerings from a subscription box will boost consumer loyalty and long-term involvement. To further digital awareness and transmit common ideals, the brand will also develop strategic alliances with designers, chefs, and sustainability influencers.
The business approach will mix retail with corporate and B2B channels to help to offset seasonality. Embassy, hotel, and cultural institution collaborations in premium gifting will

be sought for. Beyond retail, chocolate seminars, VIP tastings, and corporate gift services will help to strengthen the brand. Duty-free locations at Lisbon Airport will provide ongoing exposure to valuable foreign visitors even during low season.

From site and experience design to ethical sourcing, narrative, digital innovation, and distribution variety, this all-encompassing strategy tackles Lisbon's structural limitations as well as its special possibilities (Roland Berger, 2019). Driven by purpose and anchored in sustainability, the brand will function as a platform for education, cultural expression, and community involvement rather than only as a retailer. Combining creativity with workmanship will create a new benchmark for ethical luxury in Lisbon and appeal to both residents and visitors from beyond.

6.2.1 SWOT Analysis Conclusion

The SWOT study has given a whole picture of the strategic orientation, competitive environment, and outside market elements affecting the opening of a sustainable chocolate store in Lisbon. The results underline the possibilities of using Lisbon's premium food culture, sustainability-oriented consumer trends, and expanding luxury tourism sector as well as the difficulties including strong market competition, high operating costs, logistical restrictions, and seasonality-driven demand fluctuations. Combining these ideas will help the company create a strong, flexible, long-term plan guaranteed to be financially viable and differentiating from others.

The company model's main strength is how well it fits changing consumer tastes. Particularly among wealthy consumers, expats, and high-spending visitors in Lisbon, sustainable, high-quality, and ethically sourced food products are becoming increasingly sought after. Campo de Ourique's flagship site deliberately places the company in a gastronomically savvy area where customers are more likely to value workmanship, premium products, and openness in sourcing. Campo de Ourique provides a more community-driven market with year-round demand, so lessening the vulnerability connected with seasonal travel than over-commercialized retail zones like Chiado or Avenida da Liberdade, which are mostly dominated by international brands. Furthermore supporting the brand's capacity to include customers beyond transactional purchases is the integration of an

immersive retail model with transparent bean-to-- bar chocolate-making technique, scent-based customer attraction, and interactive tasting stations.

Still, the flaws in the study have to be carefully controlled to guarantee long-term viability. With established chocolatiers and worldwide premium food companies already present, Lisbon's retail scene is quite competitive. The difficulty is teaching the market about the value proposition of bean-to-- bar chocolate and separating the brand from mass-market and semi-artisanal rivals, even while the brand will stress sustainability, Portuguese-inspired flavours, and a direct-trade supply chain. Furthermore, high initial investment costs including microfactory setup and premium retail environment demand a carefully thought out financial structure to guarantee profitability in the first years of business.

Particularly in digital expansion, corporate gifting, premium alliances, and e-commerce-driven internationalisation, the prospects in the sector are really strong. Lisbon's high-end hotel sector and airport duty-free policy guarantee exposure outside in-store purchases by offering an easily accessible, high-value clientele of business travellers and visitors. Through subscription-based chocolate deliveries, online customising, and interactive e-commerce platforms including virtual factory tours and blockchain-enabled transparency, the fast evolution of digital consumer engagement opens other routes for market expansion. Portugal's move towards sustainable business practices also offers a chance to create special corporate gifting programs, so establishing the brand as a preferred premium chocolate supplier for luxury events, corporate meetings, and hotel alliances.

Notwithstanding these benefits, the analysis reveals hazards that call for proactive risk reducing measures. Driven by climate change, supply chain interruptions, and geopolitical unrest in cocoa-producing areas, changes in world cocoa prices pose one of the most major hazards. The company has to mix its supplier chain to guarantee a consistent and sustainable buying strategy that reduces price volatility. Seasonality in Lisbon's tourism industry also means that the company has to create other revenue sources including corporate partnerships, duty-free retail placements, and experiential private events aimed at high-net-worth individuals rather than rely just on walk-in consumers. Moreover, the growing stringency of EU sustainability rules especially with relation to carbon footprint management and packaging waste demand ongoing investments in ecologically friendly packaging, energy-efficient shop operations, and carbon offset projects.

Given these results, the success of the sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon will rely on the brand's capacity to combine a multidimensional approach covering retail innovation,

sustainability leadership, and digital transformation. By using a prominent location in Campo de Ourique, an engaging retail experience, and a product line inspired by Portuguese culinary traditions, the business will position itself as a pioneer in the country's luxury artisanal chocolate sector. However, a long-term growth strategy must be implemented to ensure adaptability to external challenges, particularly in global supply chain stability, economic downturns, and competitive pressures from international brands.

The conclusions drawn from the SWOT analysis suggest that the chocolatier has significant potential to become a reference in the premium and sustainable chocolate market in Portugal. An original in-store concept, direct-trade supply chain, and distinctive product offers help the brand to be a real and high-value proposition for both residents and foreign customers. Maintaining long-term financial resilience and a leadership role in Lisbon's developing luxury food sector, success will depend on constant brand uniqueness, ongoing customer interaction, and a dynamic commitment to sustainability-driven innovation.

Chapter 7. Final Conclusion

Research on the viability of a sustainable chocolate shop in Lisbon has shown that gastronomic tourism, ethical consumption, and sustainable business methods are combining forces influencing the contemporary food sector. The chocolate industry has been greatly impacted by the worldwide need for more open, responsible, and ethically based goods, which is driving growing interest in premium, sustainable substitutes. Against this background, Lisbon seems to be a good place for a business that fits these changing consumer expectations, thanks to its rich gastronomic tradition and consistent increase of culinary experiences motivated by travel.

A particular strength of this research lies in the methodological approach adopted. The decision to develop a semi-structured interview guide and apply it to a panel of specialists with direct experience in Lisbon's chocolate sector allowed for a nuanced and practice-based understanding of the market. This expert insight added depth to the analysis, capturing operational dynamics, sustainability practices, and consumer preferences that would not have emerged through desk research alone.

According to the study, sustainable chocolate companies have the ability to support more general social and environmental goals in addition to the local economy. Such a business might be a change agent in the sector by combining ideas of ethical sourcing, fair trade, and

responsible manufacturing, therefore providing a model that gives both profitability and positive influence top priority. Sustainable chocolate is a statement about ideals, environmental care, and social responsibility rather than only a good. Turning this concept into a profitable company, meanwhile, will mean overcoming major obstacles including consumer price sensitivity, supply chain difficulties, and competition from mass-market chocolate companies.

One important discovery of the research is the expanding but still niche market for chocolate created with ethical standards. Though their willingness to pay a premium for sustainability is not always certain, consumers are growing more conscious of the social and environmental consequences of their buying choices. This paradox emphasises the need for consumer knowledge and involvement, therefore presenting the company not only as a retailer but also as a champion of environmental ideas. Building confidence and a devoted clientele depends on storytelling, engaging retail experiences, and open sourcing policies. Combining instructional elements such as seminars, tastings, and partnerships with ethical cocoa growers may improve customer connection to the product and hence support its special value proposition.

The research also notes that success depends mostly on strategic orientation. Lisbon presents a great basis because of its booming travel industry and respect for handcrafted goods, but joining the market calls for meticulous uniqueness. One example is the strategic selection of Campo de Ourique as a potential location. This neighbourhood, known for its cultural vitality, pedestrian-friendly streets, and concentration of boutique commerce, aligns particularly well with the target profile for ethical chocolate: consumers who value authenticity, design, and slow, sustainable consumption.

Visibility and credibility can come from working with luxury hotels, boutiques, and cultural organisations as well as restaurants. Similarly, using digital channels and e-commerce would let the company reach ethically concerned consumers even outside its physical location. There are great chances to provide an omnichannel experience that fits current buying behaviour at the junction of sustainability and digital innovation.

Strategic planning is also demanded by operational difficulties, especially with regard to sourcing and logistics. Navigating complexity including changing raw material prices, certification procedures, and keeping relationships with ethical suppliers, a sustainable chocolate shop must guarantee a constant supply of premium, ethically derived cocoa. Creating a strong supply chain perhaps by means of direct trade alliances with cocoa-

growing communities can help to reduce risks and enhance the ethical basis of the company. Furthermore, environmentally friendly operations and sustainable packaging should be incorporated into the business model to meet broader sustainability goals and customer expectations.

Beyond only financial success, this study emphasises the part sustainable chocolate businesses play in supporting ethical tourism and urban sustainability. Such businesses fit worldwide moves towards more sustainable economic models by encouraging responsible consumption, supporting fair trade activities, and reducing environmental impact. The results imply that a well-run sustainable chocolate company in Lisbon might set a standard for including ethical entrepreneurship into the broader food and travel sectors.

The study also shows that a sustainable chocolate store in Lisbon not only makes sense but also represents a progressive response to modern consumer attitudes and environmental needs. Provided that issues with market positioning, supply chain management, and consumer engagement are effectively addressed, the combination of ethical trade, sustainability, and experience tourism offers a compelling business opportunity. Businesses that align with ethical and sustainable values not only contribute to positive social and environmental change but also secure a lasting place in a market that increasingly demands such products.

Although this study offers insightful analysis of the viability of a sustainable chocolate company, more research is needed to explore the long-term scalability of such projects, evolving consumer perceptions of sustainable luxury goods, and the financial sustainability of ethical food businesses. Through quantitative research on consumer buying patterns and price sensitivity, corporate strategies could be further refined, ensuring that sustainability remains a competitive advantage rather than a cost burden. Comparative analysis of existing sustainable chocolate companies in different regions could also provide insight into potential risks and best practices.

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Appendix – A

Name	Business/Store Characterization				Characterization of the Chocolate Used				Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication
	Type of Business (family-owned, chain of stores)	Capacity (number of seats) Address	Type of Service (cafeteria + chocolate production + pastry shop + …)	Hours of Operation	Cocoa Percentage	Origin (country)	Type of Production (artisanal, …)	Specialties	
Bettina & Niccòlo Corallo	Family-Owned Only One Store located in Príncipe Real. Online Store available	Capacity: 4 seats and a counter. R. da Escola Politécnica 4 r/c, 1250-102 Lisboa	Cafeteria. Chocolaterie.	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM Sundays and Holidays: 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM	100% / 75% / 70% 40% + milk + sugar (Milk Chocolate) Cocoa butter + sugar (White Chocolate)	São Tomé and Príncipe Venezuela Dominican Republic Bolivia	Artisanal	Chocolate with caramel and sea salt Hazelnut Pistachio	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Av. De Roma	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores	10 people + counter Av. de Roma 14D, Lisboa, 1000-195	Cafeteria and pastry shop, with centralized chocolate production at the factory in Porto	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday: Closed	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	Chocolate with Port wine Chocolate "Línguas de Gato"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Av. João Crisóstomo	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores	10 people + counter. Av. João Crisóstomo 48 Lisboa, 1050-053	"	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores	15 people + counter. Chiado: R. da Misericórdia 72 Lisboa, 1200-334	"	Monday to Sunday: 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM Thursday: 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Campo de Ourique	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores.	8 people + counter. Campo de Ourique- Rua Almeida e Sousa Lisboa, 1350-007	"	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Av. Da Igreja	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores.	40 people + counter. Av da Igreja, Lisboa	"	Monday to Thursday: 8:30 AM to 11:00 PM Friday and Saturday: 8:00 AM to 12:00 AM Sunday: 8:00 AM to 11:00 PM	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes

Name	Business/Store Characterization				Characterization of the Chocolate Used				Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication
	Type of Business (family-owned, chain of stores)	Capacity (number of seats) Address	Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication	Hours of Operation	Cocoa Percentage	Origin (country)	Type of Production (artisanal, …)	Specialties	
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Rua Castilho	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores.	5 people + counter. Rua Castilho nº65, Lisboa 1250-068	"	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday: Closed	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Belém	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores.	10 people + counter. Belém - R. de Belém 53, Lisboa, 1300-469	"	Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Arcádia Casa do Chocolate Av. Liberdade	Family-Owned, Franchising + Chain of Stores.	30 people + counter Avª da Liberdade, 180 D - Restaurante F Lisboa, 1250-146	"	Monday to Friday: 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM Saturday: 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM Sunday: Closed	Ranges from 31% to 78% Milk Chocolate: 31% White Chocolate: 28%	Ecuador São Tomé Tanzania	Artisanal, at the factory in Porto	"	Yes
Landeau Chocolate Campo de Ourique	Family-Owned + Chain of Stores	Counter + 12 seats Rua Francisco Metrass, nº6A 1350-138 Lisboa	Chocolaterie + Cafeteria Centralized artisanal production	Tuesday to Saturday: 12:00 PM to 7:00 PM Sunday: 11:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday: Closed	Hot Chocolate: 72% Cocoa	Not disclosed.	Artisanal	Landeau Chocolate Cake (percentages are a secret known only to Ms. Sofia Landeau)	No
Landeau Chocolate Loja Lx Factory	Family-Owned + Chain of Stores	Counter + 60 seats Rua Rodrigues Faria, nº103 1350-501 Lisboa	"	Monday to Friday: 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM Saturday and Sunday: 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Hot Chocolate: 72% Cocoa	Not disclosed	Artisanal	"	No
Landeau Chocolate Loja Chiado	Family-Owned + Chain of Stores	Counter + 45 seats Rua das Flores, nº70 1250-195 Lisboa	"	Monday to Sunday: 12:00 PM to 7:00 PM	Hot Chocolate: 72% Cocoa	Not disclosed	Artisanal	"	No
Landeau Chocolate El Corte Inglés	Familiar + cadeia de lojas.	Counter Only Av. António Augusto Aguiar, nº31 1068-413 Lisboa	"	Monday to Friday: 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM Saturday and Sunday: 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Hot Chocolate: 72% Cocoa	Not disclosed	Artisanal	"	No

Name	Business/Store Characterization				Characterization of the Chocolate Used				Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication
	Type of Business (family-owned, chain of stores)	Capacity (number of seats) Address	Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication	Hours of Operation	Cocoa Percentage	Origin (country)	Type of Production (artisanal, …)	Specialties	
Chocolataria Equador	Franchising (each store operates independently) Online Store: Available (with products from the main store in Porto)	6 people + counter Rua da Prata, Lisboa	Cafeteria and Chocolaterie	Every day: 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM Thursday, Friday, and Saturday: 11:00 AM to 7:30 PM	100% / 83% / 73% / 68% 56%: Darker milk chocolates 42% + milk + sugar (Milk Chocolate) Cocoa butter + sugar (White Chocolate)	São Tomé	Made in a small factory using artisanal processes	Dark chocolates of 100% and 83% Dark chocolate with ganache (special cream with sugar and soy milk) with Port wine or ginja	Yes
As Marias com Chocolate	Family-Owned (Only one physical store) Online Store: Not available	Counter + 55 seated places	Cafeteria, Chocolaterie, and Pastry Shop	Tuesdays and Saturdays: 4:00 AM to 6:00 PM Other days: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	38% 52% 65% 74% 85%	Belgium (Callebaut)	Artisanal	Fudge – caramelized chocolates Chocolate truffles in various flavors Chocolate salami with biscuit and almond Marias Tart	Not currently, but plans to include it in the future
Calçada do Cacau	Permanently Closed								
Chocolate d'Odette	Operated solely by d'Odette with a few employees	10 standing Online Store: Available	Chocolaterie only	Monday to Saturday: 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM	Ranges from 35% to 95%	Blend of cacao from São Tomé and Príncipe Peru Venezuela Ecuador Mexico Madagascar Brazil	Artisanal	Truffles Bonbons Chocolate bars	No
Godiva - Amoreiras Shopping Center	Chain of stores (part of the global Godiva brand)	Counter Amoreiras Shopping Center, Avenida Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco, Lisboa	Sale of chocolates, chocolate gifts, and related products	Monday to Sunday: 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM	Variable, ranging from 30% to 90% (depending on the product)	Belgium	Industrial with artisanal touches in some product lines	Truffles Pralines Chocolate bars Gift boxes	Yes
Godiva - Chiado	Chain of stores	No seating, small boutique-style store Largo de São Carlos, 1, Lisboa (Chiado).	Sale of chocolates, special desserts, and gifts	Monday to Sunday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Variable	Belgium	Industrial with artisanal touches in some product lines	Truffles Parfaits Éclairs with exotic fillings	Yes

Name	Business/Store Characterization				Characterization of the Chocolate Used				Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication
	Type of Business (family-owned, chain of stores)	Capacity (number of seats) Address	Reference to Sustainability, Fair Trade, … in Communication	Hours of Operation	Cocoa Percentage	Origin (country)	Type of Production (artisanal, …)	Specialties	
Godiva - Aeroporto de Lisboa	Chain of stores	No seating, focused on quick purchases. Aeroporto Humberto Delgado, Lisboa.	Sale of chocolates and gift products	Operates according to the airport schedule, typically 24 hours	Variable	Belgium	Industrial with artisanal elements	Chocolate bars Gift boxes Chocolate snacks	Yes
The Cacau Club	Boutique of artisanal chocolates, focused on subscriptions and tasting experiences	Intimate space for tastings (number of seats not specified) Rua Ribeiro Sanches 9, 1200-786 Lisboa	Chocolate tastings, "bean-to-bar" chocolate subscriptions, special events	Open occasionally for events and tastings (prior scheduling required)	Variable, depending on the artisanal chocolates offered	Various, with a focus on chocolates from controlled origins worldwide	Artisanal, emphasizing ethical and sustainable production practices	Personalized tastings Selected "bean-to-bar" chocolates	Yes

Appendix – B

Interview Guide:
Chocolate Production, Sustainability, and the Process of Opening Chocolate Shops in Lisbon

The main objective of this interview guide is to considerably improve our understanding of the market positioning, long-term sustainability strategies, advanced production techniques and complex logistical challenges associated with opening and successfully operating chocolate shops in the city of Lisbon. To this end, we will be conducting in-depth telephone interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives of well-known chocolate shops, trade associations, cocoa producers and experts in sustainability practices and fine cuisine. These extensive interviews have been carefully planned to effectively add information consumer profiles, sustainable practices that produce positive social and environmental impacts, and significant production barriers in light of growing public awareness of pressing social and environmental issues.
Goals of the Interviews:
1. Recognise the sources and processes of cocoa production employed by Lisbon's chocolate stores. 2. Examine the difficulties and practical needs involved in opening and running a chocolate shop. 3. Evaluate how the industry has embraced sustainable practices and fair trade. 4. Examine how consumers view sustainable products and how that affects their choice to buy. 5. Examine methods for increasing market competitiveness through product and service diversification. 6. Assess the part associations and governmental bodies play in encouraging environmentally friendly business practices. 7. Understand the markets for this sort of business, namely in Lisbon.
Section I: Production Techniques and Cocoa's Origin
1. Identify your chocolate shop's main suppliers of cocoa. 2. How do elements like price, certification, and quality impact the suppliers you choose? 3. Does your chocolate company engage in fair trade programs or use certified cocoa? How does this help build your brand? 4. Does your company use cocoa from various suppliers to create unique flavour profiles? 5. How is cocoa turned into chocolate by your company? 5.1. How does this process control affect the quality and positioning of your brand? 6. How does product diversification (resulting from the combination of chocolate from different regions) affect consumer perception?

Section II: Sustainable Practices and Fair Trade

1. Does your business use environmentally friendly procedures (such minimising production waste or utilising biodegradable packaging)? If yes, can you identify them?
2. What are the main challenges regarding the adoption of sustainable practices?
3. Do you believe the consumers give adequate value on these practices?
4. Do trade groups and governmental bodies support the promotion of sustainable brands?
4.1 If yes, how do they do that?
4.2 If not, how could they do that?
5. How does your business uphold fair trade values and ensure that cocoa producers receive fair prices?
7. Do these strategies influence positively customer perception for your brand? How do you acknowledge this?

Section III: Establishing and Managing a Chocolate Shop

1. When opening a chocolate shop in Lisbon, what logistical problems are most common?
2.What are the variables that you take into account when evaluating the optimal location for your store?
3.What are the important legal and regulatory matters that business owners should have a thorough understanding of?
4.What amount of equipment and infrastructure is necessary to run a chocolate shop?
5. How do strategic partnerships fit into the operations of a chocolate shop?
6. How do partnerships with cocoa producers, trade associations, and other businesses impact your company's operations?
7. In addition to chocolates, what other products or services does your store provide?
8. How can to what extent do these products and services increase the number of sales and appeal of your store?

Section IV: Consumer

1.What is the opinion of your customers regarding the origin and environmental impact of the chocolate used in your products?
2.Have you observed a rise in the demand for environmentally friendly or officially approved products from your clientele?
3. How knowledgeable do you think your target audience is regarding the social and environmental consequences of chocolate consumption?

Section V - General characterization of the interviewed

1. Enterprise
2. Nationality of the owner
3. Current Position of the interviewed at the chocolate shop/industry
4. Years working/managing in the chocolate industry/shop
5. Years working in the chocolate industry/shop in Lisbon