

# Human Resource Management and Personnel Training in Specialized Culinary Techniques in a Multicultural Environment

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## Abstract

This article examines human resource management and personnel training in specialized culinary techniques in a multicultural restaurant environment, with an analytical focus on ethnic cuisine scaling in the U.S. market. The relevance of the study is determined by persistent labor instability in hospitality, the dependence of product quality on tacit culinary knowledge, and the managerial difficulty of reproducing artisanal techniques under high service load. The novelty lies in integrating hospitality HR literature, intercultural competence research, and findings from gastronomy entrepreneurship into a single operational framework applicable to author-led restaurant brands. The article aims to identify how recruitment, onboarding, intercultural communication, process standardization, and chef-led training can be aligned to preserve authenticity while increasing throughput and consistency. The study uses analytical synthesis, comparative analysis of recent scientific publications, and case-informed interpretation of managerial practices. Sources on retention, decent work, transferable skills, cross-cultural competence, culinary HRM, and the success of ethnic restaurants were examined. The conclusion outlines a scalable training-management model for multicultural culinary teams.

## Keywords

Human Resource Management, Hospitality Workforce, Culinary Training, Multicultural Teams, Ethnic Restaurants, Tacit Knowledge Transfer, Process Standardization, Employee Retention, Cross-Cultural Competence, Restaurant Scaling

## 1. Introduction

The growth of ethnic restaurant chains in the United States has brought to the

foreground a managerial problem that hospitality research has addressed only intermittently: how to replicate highly specific cooking practices when teams differ in language, cultural habits, and prior work experience. Research on tacit knowledge in hospitality has itself noted that studies treating tacit knowledge as a central management problem remain scarce, even though food and beverage operations are especially rich in hard-to-codify practices (García-Almeida & Ballesteros-Rodríguez, 2018). In this article, author-led restaurant brands are understood as restaurant concepts in which menu architecture, sensory benchmarks, technique standards, and final quality judgments remain anchored in the founder-chef's personal authorship and continue to govern replication as the business grows. In concepts that rely on manual preparation, fine-texture judgment, and sensory decisions made by an experienced chef, expansion depends not only on attracting customers but on translating tacit, experience-based skills into routines that staff can perform consistently. Under these conditions, workforce management and culinary instruction are inseparable from product strategy.

This tension is especially visible in Central Asian cuisine, where production is labor-intensive, and product quality responds sharply to small deviations in technique. Dishes such as laghman require hand-pulled noodles, precise control of dough moisture, disciplined step sequencing, accurate heat management, and a stable sauce texture. In a high-volume urban environment, these techniques must be taught in a way that preserves authenticity while meeting expectations for service speed, repeatability, and food safety. The restaurant, therefore, functions simultaneously as a production, training, and cultural translation site.

In such concepts, the founder-chef is not simply an owner or menu author, but the primary carrier of sensory benchmarks, process discipline, and instructional logic. In the present case, product development extends to recipe standardization, technological cards, kitchen design for high-load service, and the adaptation of traditional Central Asian preparations for American diners without flattening their sensory identity. This is especially relevant for laghman, where manual noodle stretching, dough handling, and sauce calibration require repeated demonstration and correction. For that reason, personnel training in this format is inseparable from founder-led translation of culinary knowledge into routines that line cooks, prep staff, and service teams can execute under pressure.

The article addresses this managerial and educational problem through an analytical approach and a practice-oriented interpretation relevant to multicultural restaurant operations. The purpose of the study is to develop an evidence-based framework for managing human resources and training personnel in specialized culinary techniques under conditions of multicultural staffing and business scaling.

To achieve this purpose, three tasks are solved:

- 1) To systematize recent scientific findings on retention, working conditions, transferable skills, and intercultural competence in hospitality labor management;
- 2) To identify how these findings can be operationalized for chef-led transfer of complex culinary techniques in ethnic restaurant formats;

3) To formulate an analytical model for scaling an author-led restaurant concept without quality degradation in product, service, and team performance.

The scientific novelty of the article lies in combining hospitality HRM literature with gastronomy entrepreneurship and ethnic-restaurant performance research for application to a specific managerial problem: preserving authentic culinary technique under expansion pressure in a multicultural market.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Materials

The article's analytical base comprises 14 scholarly sources addressing hospitality labor management, tacit knowledge transfer, intercultural competence, culinary HRM practices, employee retention, well-being, transferable skills, chef-led operational knowledge, guest behavioral responses, ethnic restaurant performance, and gastronomy entrepreneurship. [Arjona-Granados et al. \(2025\)](#) examine cross-cultural competence and intercultural empathy in tourism and hospitality service settings; [Carlbäck et al. \(2024\)](#) analyze human resource development in restaurants through a human-capital perspective; [Ghani et al. \(2022\)](#) synthesize employee-retention challenges and retention strategies in hospitality; [Giousmpasoglou \(2024\)](#) reviews labor conditions through the lens of fair and decent work; [Nurianna et al. \(2023\)](#) study the performance implications of HRM practices in culinary small and medium-sized enterprises; [Saito et al. \(2025\)](#) systematize findings on hospitality employee well-being; [Stangl et al. \(2024\)](#) develop an integrated model of transferable skills in tourism and hospitality; [Vuksanović et al. \(2025\)](#) explore chef-led practices connecting culinary knowledge and operational performance in professional kitchens; [Yang et al. \(2025\)](#) analyze how menu, ownership, and location shape ethnic restaurant performance; [Yábar and García-Machado \(2025\)](#) identify competence profiles required for gastronomic entrepreneurship; and [Kovalchuk \(2025\)](#) outlines process-standardization and scaling principles relevant to small and medium-sized enterprises. [García-Almeida and Ballesteros-Rodríguez \(2018\)](#) are used to substantiate the discussion of tacit knowledge transfer in food-and-beverage operations and to support the claim that such knowledge remains difficult to codify in hospitality practice. [Barber et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Jeong and Jang \(2011\)](#) are included to support the interpretation of guest-facing indicators, since these studies link restaurant quality and experience attributes to repeat patronage and positive electronic word of mouth. These materials provide the theoretical and interpretive basis for constructing a founder-centered framework for personnel training and human resource management to scale specialized ethnic cuisine in a multicultural environment.

### 2.2. Methods

The study applies analytical synthesis of scientific literature, comparative interpretation of findings across hospitality HRM and gastronomy management domains, and a case-informed conceptualization of training and operational govern-

ance for multicultural restaurant teams. The article does not present an experimental design; instead, it develops an evidence-grounded managerial model by mapping literature findings to recurring operational problems in ethnic restaurant scaling: recruitment-fit mismatch, tacit knowledge transfer loss, inconsistency in execution, retention instability, and intercultural communication friction.

The case-informed component is bounded and illustrative. It draws on two source groups: publicly accessible brand materials (official website content, public social-media communication, and public customer-review information) and factual operational descriptions provided by the founder-author regarding menu design, training routines, kitchen workflow, and expansion steps. These materials are used to assess the practical fit of the literature-derived framework.

### 3. Results

The reviewed literature supports a clear analytical proposition: in multicultural restaurant operations built on specialized manual techniques, quality stability emerges not from recipe documentation alone, but from coordinated management of labor conditions, skills transfer, intercultural competence, and chef-led process governance (Carlbäck et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al. 2025). A narrow training approach focused only on “how to cook” is insufficient. The evidence base indicates that performance in hospitality settings is powerfully shaped by retention conditions, communication quality, organizational climate, and capability-building routines that allow personnel to absorb and reproduce tacit standards over time (Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Saito et al., 2025).

This conclusion is directly relevant to author-led ethnic cuisine brands seeking scale in the U.S. market. Research on the success of ethnic restaurants shows that menu configuration, ownership structure, and geographic location influence performance (Yang et al., 2025). For a Central Asian concept, product acceptance and growth therefore depend on a combined system: culinary adaptation for local demand, operational standardization, and managerial ability to preserve identity-bearing techniques during expansion. The menu is not only a commercial interface; it is a training architecture. Each item imposes different training burdens, error sensitivities, and service-time risks. In practice, the highest-risk items are often those most strongly associated with the brand’s authenticity and customer memory.

The literature on restaurant HR development indicates that underinvestment in personnel development creates long-run constraints for growth, especially when businesses expand after demand rebounds (Carlbäck et al., 2024). This finding is critical for concepts centered on hand-crafted production, since expansion without explicit knowledge-transfer routines increases dependence on a single expert and increases output variance. In chef-led systems, sensory calibration is often implicit (texture, elasticity, sauce density, seasoning balance, plating sequence, heat

exposure), creating a gap between the “written standard” and the “performed standard”. The reviewed studies collectively support the need to convert part of this tacit expertise into structured training modules while preserving expert supervision at the points where codification remains incomplete (Carlbäck et al., 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

Evidence from culinary MSMEs strengthens this interpretation. The Jakarta study found that a broad set of HRM components—from recruitment and orientation to training and development, appraisal, health and safety, and career-related practices—affects performance in foodservice businesses (Nurianna et al., 2023). Although the institutional and market conditions differ from those in the U.S. restaurant environment, the managerial implication remains transferable: small and growing culinary enterprises perform better when HR practices are treated as a system. For multicultural ethnic restaurants, such system-level treatment becomes even more relevant because technical onboarding, communication norms, and discipline around process timing directly influence guest-perceived consistency.

Retention research in hospitality adds a second layer. The review evidence links employee retention to satisfaction conditions, growth opportunities, communication quality, and recruitment-selection effectiveness (Ghani et al., 2022). In operational terms, specialized culinary training increases replacement cost: when a trained cook or line worker leaves, the business loses not only labor hours but accumulated micro-knowledge, coordination rhythm, and defect-prevention habits. In formats that rely on manual preparation and tightly sequenced production, turnover leads to a delayed decline in quality even when staffing numbers appear to be restored. For that reason, training investment and retention policy cannot be separated in the managerial design of ethnic restaurants scaling across locations (Carlbäck et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Saito et al., 2025).

The economic effect of retention in training-intensive environments can be expressed through the expected training loss function (1):

$$L = C_t \cdot P_e \quad (1)$$

where  $C_t$  is the cost of training a single employee (including supervision time and material waste), and  $P_e$  is the probability of early exit before reaching independent performance.

Introducing structured onboarding and certification reduces  $P_e$ , which directly lowers total expected loss (2):

$$L_{\text{reduced}} = C_t \cdot P'_e \text{ where } P'_e < P_e \quad (2)$$

The difference  $\Delta L = C_t(P_e - P'_e)$  represents the economic gain from improved HRM design.

In a laghman-centered production line, employee efficiency can be operationalized without relying on generic labor counts by using a small set of technique-sensitive indicators. A suitable measurement bundle includes:

- 1) The number of service cycles required for a new cook to reach stable noodle stretching quality under time pressure;
- 2) The proportion of batches requiring chef intervention;
- 3) The frequency of station handoff errors (mis-sequencing, late prep, incorrect portioning);
- 4) Lagging guest-facing indicators, especially repeat patronage patterns and positive review narratives, since perceived restaurant quality shapes repeat patronage and stimulates positive electronic word of mouth in restaurant settings.

Using guest-facing indicators in this way is analytically justified because restaurant research has linked service and experience quality to repeat patronage, while food quality, service quality, and atmosphere have been shown to trigger positive electronic word of mouth (Barber et al., 2011; Jeong & Jang, 2011).

To formalize the relationship between training effectiveness and operational performance, a simple production-consistency function can be introduced. Let the effective output of a station  $Q_{eff}$  be defined as (3):

$$Q_{eff} = Q_{raw} \cdot (1 - D - R) \quad (3)$$

where  $Q_{raw}$  is the nominal production volume per shift,  $D$  is the defect rate (share of dishes requiring correction), and  $R$  is the rework ratio (share of batches remade or adjusted after initial preparation).

Training quality can be linked to these variables through a learning coefficient  $\theta$ , defined as (4):

$$\theta = \frac{1}{T_p} \quad (4)$$

where  $T_p$  is the average number of service cycles required for a new employee to reach stable performance. As  $\theta$  increases (faster learning), both  $D$  and  $R$  empirically decrease due to improved technique stability and coordination.

The adjusted production function can therefore be written as (5):

$$Q_{eff} = Q_{raw} \cdot (1 - f(\theta)) \quad (5)$$

where  $f(\theta)$  captures the combined decline in defects and rework as training efficiency improves.

When a training method reduces intervention frequency and handoff errors, effective capacity rises because the same staffing level produces more consistent output with fewer bottlenecks. This is the operational meaning of “efficiency gains” in artisanal, manual-technique concepts, where throughput depends on coordinated skill execution.

The labor conditions literature explains why this integration matters. A fair and decent work agenda in hospitality is tied to concerns about pay equity, workload pressure, underemployment, and constrained mobility (Giousmpasoglou, 2024). For a growing brand, these variables influence whether training produces durable capability or constant rework. If schedules are unstable, workloads are excessive, and team communication is fragmented, the transmission of complex culinary

techniques becomes episodic and error-prone. In contrast, a more stable labor environment improves the quality of repetition, peer learning, and accountability for standards. For chef-led brands, this means operational excellence is partly a labor-design outcome, not only a culinary one (Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Saito et al., 2025).

The well-being review by Saito et al. (2025) reinforces this position by consolidating evidence that hospitality employee well-being is tied to performance-relevant outcomes and managerial conditions. In practical terms, specialized technique training requires cognitive attention, motor precision, and emotional regulation under service pressure. These capacities deteriorate under fatigue, conflict, and chronic stress. Therefore, in multicultural kitchens, the quality of training transfer depends on both instructional design and working conditions. A technically correct SOP trained in a dysfunctional environment has low execution reliability during peak periods.

Intercultural competence research provides a third component of the results. Arjona-Granados et al. (2025) show the salience of cultural intelligence and empathy-related capacities in service settings, with implications for how personnel interpret customer expectations and interact across differences. In a multicultural kitchen and front-of-house system, intercultural competence has dual value: it improves guest interaction and reduces internal friction during training. Many errors in culinary onboarding are misdiagnosed as “lack of skill” when the actual cause is linguistic ambiguity, culturally different assumptions about hierarchy, or mismatched communication style. For author-led ethnic restaurants introducing unfamiliar dishes to a broad U.S. audience, intercultural competence extends beyond service scripts; it also encompasses product explanations, upselling, and recovery interactions when guests need guidance on flavors, ingredients, and eating conventions (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025).

The transferable-skills literature clarifies how training should be sequenced. Stangl et al. (2024) propose an integrated understanding of transferable skills in tourism and hospitality grounded in a multi-method approach. For restaurant scaling, this supports a layered training design in which specialized culinary techniques are taught alongside communication, teamwork, time coordination, problem-solving, and service awareness. In other words, a worker trained only in one manual task remains challenging to deploy flexibly; a worker trained in both technique and transferable operational skills contributes to resilience during rush periods and cross-station adaptation (Stangl et al., 2024). This point is highly relevant to ethnic cuisine formats, where demand volatility, menu complexity, and staffing constraints require rapid role adjustments without compromising quality.

Chef-led knowledge studies offer a practical bridge between HRM and production control. Vuksanović et al. (2025) highlight the influence of chef-led practices in professional kitchens, showing how kitchen leadership and creative operational adjustments affect performance in a sustainability-linked domain. Although their focal issue is food waste, the underlying managerial insight is broader: the head

chef's vision and daily decisions shape how teams learn, adapt, and translate standards into repeatable routines (Vuksanović et al., 2025). For specialized ethnic cuisine, the exact mechanism governs texture consistency, prep discipline, and sauce standardization.

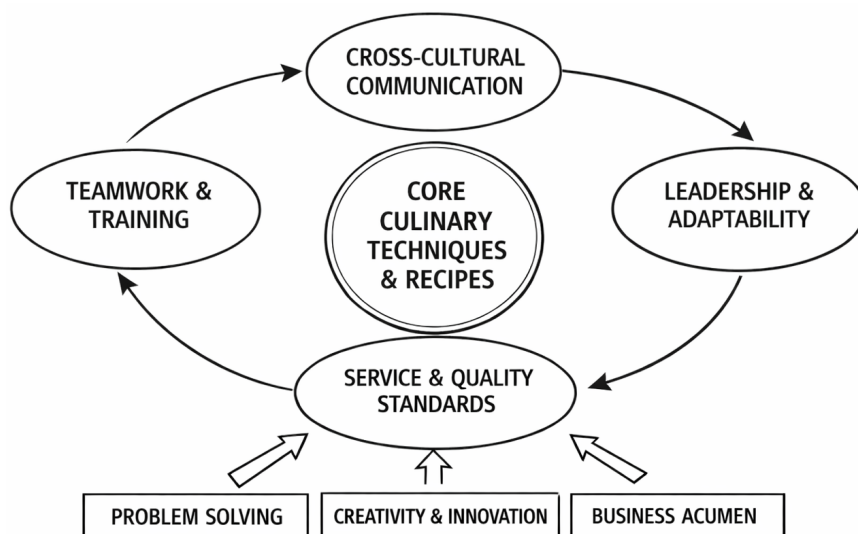
Research on gastronomy entrepreneurship further supports the centrality of founder competencies. Yábar and García-Machado (2025) identify a multidisciplinary competence profile for gastronomic entrepreneurs, differentiating training-related competences from those acquired during industry practice. This distinction is analytically useful for scaling an author-led concept. The founder's competencies span culinary design, sensory judgment, business management, leadership, and market adaptation. In early growth stages, these competencies often remain concentrated in one person. Expansion quality, therefore, depends on whether the founder's tacit and hybrid competencies are progressively translated into organizational capabilities (training routines, role definitions, process checks, escalation rules, and quality feedback loops) without reducing the product to a generic standardized form (Yábar & García-Machado, 2025; Kovalchuk, 2025).

The ethnic restaurant performance study by Yang et al. (2025) adds a strategic market lens. Their analysis of menu, ownership, and location in relation to ethnic restaurant success supports the interpretation that product-market fit and managerial structure interact with operational outcomes. For a Central Asian concept entering or expanding in major U.S. metropolitan markets, menu engineering and ownership-led quality control are not separate from HR decisions. A broader menu with many technique-intensive items may increase authenticity signaling yet expand training load, error exposure, and service-time variance. A narrower menu may improve training efficiency but reduce cultural distinctiveness if simplification is excessive. The reviewed literature therefore supports a balanced menu strategy tied to workforce capability maturity (Nurianna et al., 2023; Stangl et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2025).

In the bounded case-informed illustration used here, the literature-derived framework is read against a chef-founded Central Asian restaurant brand (Laghman Express) using public brand materials and factual operational descriptions supplied by the founder-author. Publicly available materials from the brand confirm active operations in New York and Georgia (Alpharetta), as well as a brand narrative centered on handmade noodles and Central Asian culinary identity, consistent with the training-intensive operational profile discussed in this article. Platform-visible business signals allow a more differentiated interpretation of capability-building outcomes than employment figures alone. The brand's first three locations achieved unusually strong review depth and rating stability in the U.S. restaurant market, with review counts in the thousands and average ratings of 4.9 across sites. Digital demand formation appears equally relevant: the brand reports an Instagram audience of over 20,000 followers, average content reach approaching one million views, high user-generated engagement, and individual videos reaching several hundred thousand views. From an HR and training perspective, these indicators are

not merely promotional outcomes. They suggest that the organization has been able to reproduce guest-facing consistency across repeated service encounters, which is only possible when culinary execution, front-of-house explanation, and shift-level coordination remain stable. Catering requests for events serving up to approximately 1000 guests further reinforce this interpretation, because such demand places pressure on station discipline, batch control, and the transferability of standards beyond routine in-store service. These public indicators are used here as illustrative signals of operational replication.

A further result of the synthesis concerns market formation. In niche ethnic categories, training quality affects not only operational consistency but category education. When teams can reliably explain dishes, maintain texture and flavor standards, and serve at a pace acceptable to mainstream urban consumers, the restaurant does more than transact; it teaches the market how to consume the cuisine. This mechanism aligns with the founder's reported observations of competitors' imitation (for example, beverage formats, plating cues, sauce style cues), which, in strategic terms, can be interpreted as a diffusion signal that demand has been created. Within the present analytical model, such diffusion is driven by training and HR quality, as imitation pressure typically rises only after customers repeatedly encounter a stable, legible product experience.



**Figure 1.** Integrated transferable-skills framework for multicultural culinary team development in ethnic restaurant scaling (adapted from the transferable-skills model in Stangl et al., 2024).

To operationalize the literature synthesis for practice, the article proposes a founder-centered capability transfer logic in which culinary authenticity is preserved through staged codification (see **Figure 1**). Early stages prioritize direct chef demonstration, shadowing, and error correction on a limited menu core. Intermediate stages add structured onboarding, station-level skill matrices, and multilingual visual SOPs for high-variance tasks. Advanced stages introduce location-

level trainer roles, calibration audits, and exception-handling protocols that identify which decisions remain chef-controlled. This trajectory reflects the combined implications of HRD investment (Carlbäck et al., 2024), retention/system practices (Ghani et al., 2022), decent work conditions (Giousmpasoglou, 2024), skill integration (Stangl et al., 2024), chef-led kitchen governance (Vuksanović et al., 2025), ethnic restaurant strategic design (Yang et al., 2025), and gastronomic entrepreneurship competencies (Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

As shown in **Figure 1**, the analytical structure that best fits specialized ethnic restaurant scaling is not linear (“train technique → open location”), but recursive. Technical instruction, transferable skills, intercultural competence, labor conditions, and retention practices feed back into one another.

A practice-oriented illustration of the proposed method can be expressed through an HR-and-operations KPI chain relevant to a hand-crafted laghman format. After introducing staged codification (chef demonstration → supervised repetition → station certification) and assigning trainer roles for high-variance tasks, performance tracking can be organized around time-to-proficiency for new hires, defect and rework rates on flagship items (e.g., noodle texture inconsistency, sauce density deviations), ticket-time variability during peak periods, and cross-station deployability of trained employees. Operationally, shorter time-to-proficiency and lower rework translate into higher labor productivity per shift, because fewer hours are consumed by corrective remakes, supervision overrides, and post-service waste handling.

The same method yields economic benefits during recruitment and onboarding: when station-level skill matrices and certification gates are used, hiring decisions rely on observable skill benchmarks. This reduces selection errors (misfit hires) and lowers replacement cost, because early-stage screening and standardized onboarding narrow performance variance between new employees. In accounting terms, the benefit can be framed as a reduction in training hours per successful hire and a lower probability of restarting onboarding due to early churn, thereby improving the return on training investment in a multicultural, high-volume kitchen setting.

A further operational implication concerns the training environment itself. In a concept built around handmade noodles, open-kitchen visibility, and signature sauces whose exact balance remains under founder control, personnel development cannot be reduced to back-of-house repetition alone. Staff learn under conditions of direct customer observation, which raises the cost of error and increases the need for synchronized communication between kitchen and front-of-house teams. In such a setting, visual SOPs, staged certification, and trainer-led correction take on added significance because the technique is performed publicly and directly contributes to brand perception. The open production format, therefore, intensifies the educational burden placed on HR systems: employees are required not only to execute correctly, but to embody process confidence in a way that reassures first-time customers encountering a non-mainstream cuisine.

The more complex and identity-bearing the product, the stronger this interdependence becomes. The literature synthesis therefore supports the article's central claim: in multicultural restaurant environments, human resource management and culinary technique training form a single managerial system, and their integration determines whether authenticity can survive expansion.

#### 4. Discussion

The analytical findings indicate that the standard hospitality HR toolkit needs to be modified when applied to author-led ethnic cuisine formats that use labor-intensive preparation techniques. Conventional HR frameworks in restaurants often prioritize staffing sufficiency, scheduling, and turnover reduction. Those priorities remain relevant, yet the reviewed literature suggests that in specialized culinary systems, the decisive managerial variable is the reproducibility of tacit method under multicultural team conditions (Carlbäck et al., 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025). In practical terms, a restaurant may appear adequately staffed while still being under-capable if its personnel cannot reproduce texture, timing, and sensory calibration at peak volume.

This interpretation helps explain why some ethnic restaurant concepts remain niche despite demand interest. Market entry alone does not guarantee category growth. The reviewed studies on ethnic-restaurant and gastronomy entrepreneurship imply that menu design, founder competence, and location advantages must be translated into repeatable operations before wider diffusion becomes possible (Yang et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025). For a Central Asian concept, the challenge is sharpened by the dual requirement to preserve cultural identity while meeting mainstream expectations for speed, consistency, and clarity of service. A training model that preserves authenticity but fails to improve throughput will constrain growth; a model that increases throughput by oversimplifying core techniques risks brand dilution and weakens long-term differentiation.

**Table 1** synthesizes how literature-based mechanisms can be mapped to operational problems typical of a scaling ethnic restaurant brand in a multicultural U.S. environment.

**Table 1.** Literature-to-operation mapping for HRM and specialized culinary training in a multicultural ethnic restaurant format (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025; Carlbäck et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Saito et al., 2025; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

Operational problem in scaling	Literature-based explanatory mechanism	Managerial implications for training and HR
Inconsistent dish quality across shifts	Tacit knowledge remains uncodified; training is station-specific but not systematized	Build staged codification: chef demo → visual SOP → supervised repetition → calibration audits
High training losses due to turnover	Hospitality retention depends on satisfaction conditions, communication, and growth pathways	Integrate retention policy with training investment; protect trained staff through scheduling stability and progression routes

## Continued

Miscommunication in multicultural teams	Intercultural competence and empathy shape service and internal coordination	Add intercultural communication routines, multilingual cues, and role-specific communication scripts to onboarding
Service slowdown during peak demand	Technical skill trained without transferable coordination skills	Train teamwork, time coordination, handoff discipline, and recovery behavior alongside culinary techniques
Founder bottleneck in quality control	Entrepreneurial and culinary competence concentrated in one person	Define “non-delegable” chef controls and delegate trainable controls through the trainer hierarchy
Menu complexity outpaces staff capability	Menu breadth interacts with ethnic restaurant success and execution capacity	Sequence menu expansion by capability maturity; protect flagship items with stricter certification
Authenticity loss during adaptation	Market adaptation and standardization are not synchronized	Use adaptation boundaries (what can change/what cannot change) in recipe governance

A more suitable lens combines capability retention, training transfer quality, and founder-standard diffusion. This is consistent with the human-capital perspective in restaurant HRD (Carlbäck et al., 2024) and with culinary MSME evidence that HR practices affect company performance through multiple channels (Nurianna et al., 2023). It is equally consistent with the decent-work and well-being literature, which shows why training efficacy degrades in unstable labor conditions (Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Saito et al., 2025).

The same lens clarifies the economic side of recruitment and staffing. In founder-led ethnic concepts, the most expensive hiring mistake is not the wage cost of an unproductive shift, but the loss of training time spent on candidates who fail to stabilize technique. A structured method—visual SOPs, station checklists, skill matrices, and staged certification—allows the organization to treat “trainability” as a measurable criterion. This reduces the share of hires that exit before reaching independent execution and lowers the need for repeated onboarding cycles. For a brand scaling across locations, the effect is amplified: trainer-led calibration compresses variability between teams, reduces cross-site quality drift, and decreases the number of escalations that require founder time. As a result, recruitment becomes more predictable, training hours become more “convertible” into stable performance, and labor productivity improves through fewer remakes, fewer corrective interventions, and smoother peak-period coordination.

This conversion can be quantified through a training return ratio (6):

$$TR = \frac{Q_{eff}}{H_t} \quad (6)$$

where  $Q_{eff}$  is the effective output (as defined earlier), and  $H_t$  is the total number of training hours invested.

Under unstructured training conditions,  $H_t$  increases without proportional gains in  $Q_{eff}$ , leading to a lower  $TR$ . In contrast, staged codification and trainer-based systems increase the marginal productivity of each training hour (7):

$$\frac{dQ_{eff}}{dH_t} \uparrow \quad (7)$$

This indicates that the same training investment produces more stable operational outcomes.

At the same time, the discussion needs a market-facing dimension. In multicultural urban markets such as New York, customer adoption of a non-mainstream cuisine often depends on repeated positive experiences that reduce uncertainty. Reliable execution and clear front-of-house explanation build trial conversion and repeat visitation. Here, intercultural competence and transferable skills become commercial variables (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025). The founder's claim about category education effects and imitation by competitors can be interpreted through this lens: when a restaurant repeatedly delivers a legible and attractive experience, competitors copy surface features (presentation, beverages, sauces) because the original operator has already lowered consumer learning costs and validated demand.

**Table 2.** Phased capability-building model for scaling a chef-led Central Asian restaurant brand in a multicultural environment (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025; Carlbäck et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Saito et al., 2025; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

Scaling phase	HR priority	Training priority	Control architecture	Expected risk if omitted
Phase I: Single-site stabilization	Recruitment fit, onboarding discipline, and schedule reliability	Core flagship techniques (e.g., handmade noodle production, sauce base consistency, line sequencing)	Founder-chef direct supervision; shift-end sensory checks	Early reputation volatility, inconsistent first impressions, rework
Phase II: Multi-shift consistency	Retention, communication norms, and role clarity	Repeatability drills, visual SOPs, bilingual station instructions, and handoff protocols	Station leads + founder calibration	Founder overload, training drift, service-time variance
Phase III: Multi-location replication	Internal trainer development, performance review integration	Train-the-trainer modules, certification of high-variance techniques, recovery scripts	Location audits, cross-site calibration, and exception escalation	Quality divergence across sites, authenticity erosion
Phase IV: Expansion platform (franchise/investor readiness)	Talent pipeline and governance standardization	Standard curriculum + protected founder methods + adaptation boundaries	Governance manual, audit scorecards, founder-controlled "signature" checkpoints	Brand commodification, reputational dilution, franchise inconsistency

**Table 2** translates the discussion into an implementation logic suitable for a chef-led brand expanding from one city to multiple locations. Movement from one phase to the next is not triggered solely by sales growth. The transition from Phase I to Phase II begins when demand, shift volume, or operating hours exceed the

founder-chef's capacity to personally recalibrate every service cycle. The move from Phase II to Phase III becomes necessary when recurrent cross-shift drift or new-site openings make local improvisation too costly. The transition from Phase III to Phase IV occurs when investor, franchise, or multi-city expansion opportunities require a governance system capable of reproducing standards without continuous founder presence.

From a systems perspective, scaling can be interpreted as maintaining variance within acceptable bounds. Let  $\sigma_q^2$  denote variance in product quality across shifts or locations. The objective of the training system is to minimize (8):

$$\sigma_q^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (q_i - \underline{q})^2 \quad (8)$$

where  $q_i$  represents observed quality outcomes and  $\underline{q}$  is the target standard defined by the founder.

Implementation of standardized training protocols, calibration audits, and trainer hierarchies reduces dispersion (9):

$$\sigma_q^2 \downarrow \quad (9)$$

This reduction is critical for multi-location replication, where uncontrolled variance leads to brand dilution.

The founder-chef's individuality is not a contradiction to system-building; it is the starting condition for it. The reviewed gastronomy entrepreneurship literature supports a multidisciplinary competency profile for successful gastronomic management (Yábar & García-Machado, 2025), while the chef-led kitchen literature shows how leadership vision shapes team learning and operational adaptation (Vuksanović et al., 2025). In the short run, such centrality drives market differentiation. In the long run, it creates a governance problem that only structured HRM and training architecture can solve.

This point is especially relevant to the founder's stated ambition to scale beyond New York into additional U.S. cities and to respond to investor/franchise interest. In author-led ethnic cuisine systems, franchise readiness is not equivalent to recipe documentation. It requires proof that the organization can reproduce founder-level judgment through layered controls: who trains, who certifies, who recalibrates, which deviations are acceptable, and which decisions remain non-delegable. The literature reviewed in this article strongly supports the view that such proof depends on integrating HRD, retention, labor conditions, transferable skills, and intercultural competence (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025; Carlback et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Saito et al., 2025; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

A separate discussion point concerns market impact and imitation. The founder's reports of "clones" and copied products, including drinks and stylistic serving cues, are best interpreted as secondary market evidence of category creation. Research on ethnic restaurant success (Yang et al., 2025) and gastronomy entrepreneurship competence (Yábar & García-Machado, 2025) helps explain why this pat-

tern emerges around founder-led concepts that combine product originality with operational discipline. Once customer demand is educated and normalized, competitors copy visible features first because deeper capabilities (tacit technique, training routines, sensory control) are more complex to imitate. This distinction has strategic significance: a brand protected only by recipes is vulnerable; a brand protected by founder-embedded training systems and quality governance retains an advantage longer.

In the present case, imitation extends beyond broad cuisine positioning to more specific, visible elements, including house-style fruit beverages, plating cues, and patterns of sauce presentation. For this article, this matters less as a branding anecdote than as evidence of market education generated by reproducible service performance. Competitors usually copy what customers have already learned to recognize and request. In that sense, imitation indirectly signals that the restaurant's internal training system has produced an externally legible product grammar. What is being diffused is not only a dish category but also a standardized format for preparation, explanation, and presentation, first stabilized within the founding organization.

Two limitations delimit the present framework. First, it is designed around a founder-centered operating model in which sensory standards, technique judgments, and escalation authority remain concentrated in the founder-chef. In non-founder-led or more corporatized ethnic restaurant chains, these functions are more likely to be redistributed across culinary directors, training departments, procurement systems, and franchise governance manuals. Second, the model travels most easily to concepts whose differentiation depends on high-tacit, technique-sensitive production. In those settings, the proposed logic would need to be adapted by shifting emphasis from founder-led calibration to institutionalized governance and cross-site control routines.

The discussion, therefore, supports a final conceptual refinement. In multicultural kitchens that handle complex manual techniques, "authenticity" should not be treated as a static cultural label. It is better understood as a managed performance outcome produced by people, training routines, labor conditions, and founder-supervised quality interpretation. Under this definition, human resource management does not sit beside culinary identity; it stabilizes culinary identity under scale pressure. The reviewed literature provides sufficient analytical support for this reframing and offers a stronger scholarly foundation for practitioner-facing recommendations in ethnic restaurant expansion.

## 5. Conclusion

The study solved the stated tasks and developed an analytical framework for managing human resources and personnel training in specialized culinary techniques in a multicultural restaurant environment. The first task was completed by systematizing recent literature on hospitality retention, working conditions, well-being, transferable skills, cross-cultural competence, culinary HRM, ethnic restaurant suc-

cess, and gastronomic entrepreneurship. The synthesis showed that stable performance in hospitality depends on the joint action of labor conditions, communication quality, skill formation, and organizational capability-building (Arjona-Granados et al., 2025; Carlbäck et al., 2024; Ghani et al., 2022; Giousmpasoglou, 2024; Nurianna et al., 2023; Saito et al., 2025; Stangl et al., 2024; Vuksanović et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025; Yábar & García-Machado, 2025).

The second task was to translate these findings into the operational logic of chef-led ethnic restaurants. The analysis established that in concepts based on labor-intensive and sensory-sensitive techniques, training and HRM form a unified managerial system. Retention influences the return on training investment; intercultural competence shapes both internal learning and guest interaction; transferable skills increase resilience under service pressure; chef-led supervision determines the boundary between codifiable routines and expert judgment. In this system, quality degradation during scaling is primarily a capability-transfer failure.

The third task was completed by formulating a phased capability-building model to expand an author-led Central Asian restaurant concept in the U.S. market. The proposed model links recruitment fit, onboarding, multilingual and visual SOPs, train-the-trainer structures, audit routines, and founder-controlled signature checkpoints.

For the American market, the case has broader significance because it shows how an ethnic restaurant brand can expand culinary diversity, establish new consumption habits, and make a previously niche cuisine intelligible to a broader urban audience through disciplined training and operational translation. In this interpretation, the contribution lies not only in launching a commercially viable concept but in building a transferable method: recipe codification, technological cards, high-load kitchen organization, multilingual and visual instruction, and the preservation of sensory standards in manual noodle production and sauce preparation. The case further suggests that successful expansion from Brooklyn to Atlanta, accompanied by inquiries from additional cities and franchise stakeholders, depends on whether this method can be transmitted without sensory dilution. The broader contribution of the model, therefore, lies in converting individual culinary expertise into an organizational teaching system that supports cultural diffusion, market formation, and durable quality governance.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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