

Exploring the Nexus of Globalization, the fusion and authenticity of ethnic Nepali cuisines and cultural identity in Ethnic Nepali Restaurants in Finland

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Introduction: The research aims to explore the nexus of globalization, authenticity, ethnic fusion, and the construction of cultural identity via the ethnic Nepali culinary enterprises in Finland.</p> <p>Methods: This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the complex intercultural phenomena within the ethnic Nepali restaurant. It employs face-to-face, in-depth semi-structured interviews and field observation as the data collection method.</p> <p>Results: The study uncovers a dual challenge faced by representatives of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland, the need for ethnic fusion to adapt their cuisines according to the local customer preferences which is necessary to survive in the local culinary market and preservation of ethnic authenticity which is one of the crucial cultural identity markers. It uncovers the diverse strategies adopted by them to cope with these dual challenges.</p> <p>Discussion: The findings suggest that ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland are not only a means of sustenance; rather they play a central role in the negotiation and construction of ethnic Nepali cultural identity in Finland.</p> <p>Conclusion: Globalization impacts minority culinary practices in host countries significantly, however, such establishment can play a crucial role in the socio-economic integration of minority ethnic communities in the host settings by helping in the construction of cultural identity, and a sense of belongingness.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The present interdisciplinary research aims to examine the multifaceted area of ethnic entrepreneurship and the nexus between globalization, a fusion of ethnic cuisines and its impact on ethnic authenticity and consequently its impact on the cultural identity construction of ethnic restaurateurs.

The phenomenon of globalization has impacted every sphere of human society, it has accelerated the pace of transnational migration worldwide. Such consequences have severely impacted the way we eat and the way we take global culinary culture. This study critically examines the intricate entanglement of ethnic entrepreneurship, culinary culture, economy, and transnational migration in a single framework and explores how such a broader phenomenon has come to impact the minority ethnic Nepali entrepreneurs in Finland.

To be specific the study primarily aims to depict the identity awareness and challenges faced by minority ethnic Nepali restaurateurs in maintaining the authenticity of Nepali ethnic cuisines in Finland. The study also investigates factors that motivate Nepali immigrants in Finland to engage in ethnic enterprises and such enterprises prompt their integration into the Finnish labour market. One of the primary concerns of the study is to examine the role of ethnic Nepali food businesses in bridging the source and host culture and the strategies used by Nepali ethnic restaurateurs to adapt them to the Finnish culinary landscapes.

The present study emphasizes culinary culture and ethnic cuisines as important cultural identity markers. It borrows various theoretical frameworks in the rubrics of ethnic entrepreneurship to study how minority ethnic Nepali restaurateurs reconnect themselves with their

ethnicity via ethnic food practices and how the dynamics of intercultural culinary practices within their restaurant premises enhance intercultural awareness in the host society.

1.1. Objective and Scope of the Research

Ethnic entrepreneurship is a multifaceted and complex area of study it primarily focuses on the immigrants' entrepreneurial activities in the host society. Owing to the limitation of the present research, I specialise my focus on the minority ethnic Nepali restauranteurs in Finland as a key research area. The current study examines how ethnic Nepali restaurant enterprises construct their cultural identity through their ethnic culinary practice and how they deal with the nuances of globalisation in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Finally, another primary objective of the study is to examine how cultural differences and language barriers obstruct ethnic Nepali restauranteurs from using the local media and building intercultural communication with their clients.

The current study addresses the relatively understudied and underexplored topic of ethnic Nepali restaurant business in Finland. There has been some academic research on ethnic Nepali restaurants in a context other than Finland. However, most existing studies on ethnic Nepali restaurants primarily focus on the issues related to the financial, and business growth dynamics, institutional and organisational challenges, employment paradigms, necessity and opportunity motivational factors etc. A detailed review of the existing literature on the field suggested that there is a scarcity of academic research that examines the inherent intercultural dynamics within ethnic Nepali restaurant enterprises. Therefore, this study aims to provide valuable insight into the inherent intercultural dynamics of ethnic Nepali restaurant business in Finland.

1.2. Research Structure

The present research will have the following chapters divisions. The present chapter provides a brief introduction to the study. The second chapter offers the background of the study and the factors that necessitated it. Additionally, it provides the fundamental conceptual framework by describing the flow of Nepali immigrants in Finland, the ethnic/cultural and culinary

diversity of Nepal and its impact on the culinary practice of the ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland.

The third chapter provides the theoretical framework of the study. It incorporates recent theoretical developments in ethnic entrepreneurship. It presents the relevance of the broader globalization phenomena with transnational migration and its impact on ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. Owing to the importance of ethnic entrepreneurship on a global migratory trajectory this chapter seeks to relate the ethnic Nepali entrepreneurship phenomena as a part of the global flow of ethnoscaapes. This chapter sheds light on the cross-cultural adaptation of ethnic Nepali restauranteurs in Finland via ethnic culinary practices.

The fourth chapter deals with the methodological framework and data collection method. It explains the rationale behind choosing the qualitative approach as the research methodology, semi-structured interviews as the data collection method and the thematic analysis (T.A.) as the data analysis approach. Further, this chapter justifies the ethical consideration of the study.

The fifth chapter presents the analysis of the dominant and recurrent theme of the interview data. The sixth chapter deals with the limitations and implications of the study, and the direction for future research in the ethnic Nepali restaurant enterprises in Finland.

1.3. Research Questions

- a. How do culinary practices in ethnic Nepali restaurants help in the construction of cultural identity?
- b. How do ethnic Nepali restauranteurs deal with the questions of globalization and authenticity of ethnic cuisines?
- c. How do language barriers and cultural differences impact ethnic Nepali Restauranteurs in Finland?

2 BACKGROUNDS OF THE RESEARCH

2.1. The flow of Nepalese Immigration to Finland

Nepal a small landlocked country between China and India was relatively unexplored to the outer world until the end of the Rana regime in 1950 AD. Transnational migration from Nepal was significantly rare by that time, it was even significantly limited until the early 90s. But in the last three decades, the flow of transnational migrations from Nepal has seen a paradigm shift (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, 2022).

Political instability, decade-long Maoist-led civil war and the political transformation of the country that took place during 1991-2015 AD are some of the key players behind the upheaval in transnational trajectory In Nepal. At present transnational migration has become an integral part of Nepali society that has impacted every family in Nepal. According to the government data just around 7.4 per cent of Nepali people are engaged in transnational migration for work and education (Sharma et., al., 2014). However, the social reality of Nepal depicts that even far Nepalese are involved in transnational migrations from Nepal because it is argued that a significantly large number of transnational migrants to India from Nepal has not been included in the official government data due to the open border between two countries.

War, poverty, and the pursuit of something are some of the primary push factors that compel people to leave their homeland and migrate to foreign countries (Svensson, 2002). In the context of Nepal poverty, lack of employment opportunities, conflict, social, environmental, political, and the growing demand for skilled and low-skilled migrant workers worldwide with

the offer of higher wages are some of the driving factors (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, 2022).

The flow of Nepali migrants to Finland started in the early 1990s (NRNA, Finland). The current trend shows that Finland has been a popular destination for Nepali immigrants from the perspective of higher education and employment. Because the majority of the Nepali immigrants have arrived in Finland for these two purposes (Statistics Finland, and Interview participants). According to statistics in Finland, the number of Nepali immigrants in Finland has skyrocketed in recent years. In 2021 291 Nepali immigrants arrived in Finland. In 2022 it reached 640. In 2023 there was a sharp rise in Nepalese immigration to Finland which reached 1193. The below graphic shows the recent statistics of Nepali immigrants in Finland.

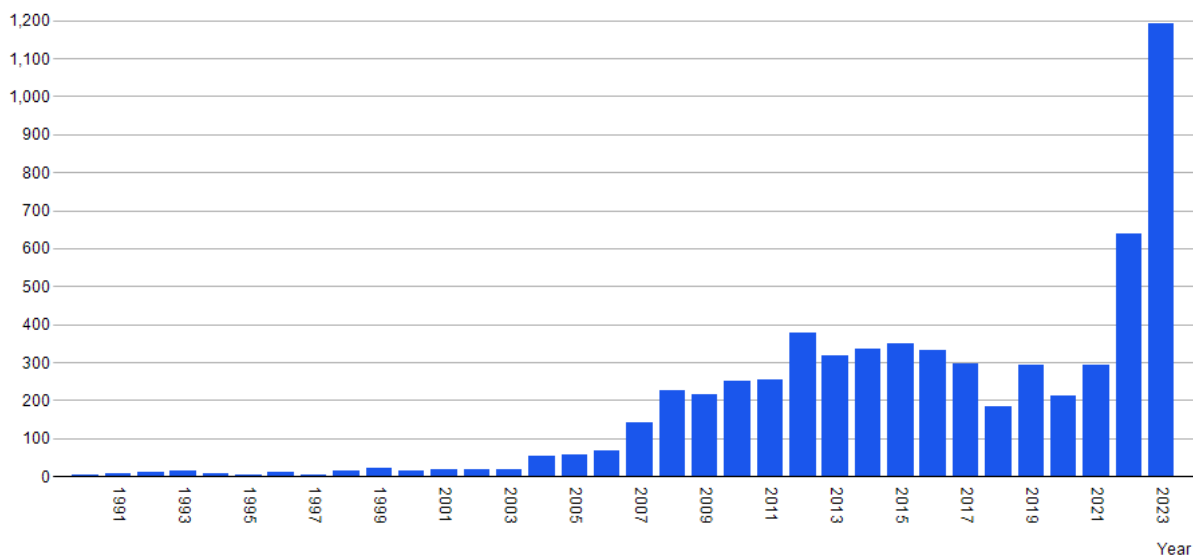


Figure 1, Nepalese immigrants to Finland from 1991 to 2023 (Source: Statistic Finland)

2.2. History of Nepalese Ethnic Restaurants in Finland

The first ethnic Nepali restaurant in Finland was “Himalaya Ravintola” which was opened in 1992 in Helsinki (NRNA, Finland). The precise and authentic data on ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland is not available but according to the research participants, different un-authentic and WOM (Word of mouth) data suggest that there are roughly around one hundred and fifty ethnic Nepalese restaurants in Finland.

The Finnish ethnic culinary market was not very diverse until the 1990s. Along with the surge of transnational migration in Finland in recent decades, the Finnish ethnic culinary landscape is getting more diverse and multicultural. According to many research participants during the late 70s and 80s Indian ethnic restaurants were popular in Finland and many of such restaurants had chefs with ethnic Nepali origins. However, the early late 90s introduced a paradigm shift in the South Asian culinary landscape in Finland when some of the chefs from the Indian ethnic restaurants took initiation to open ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. During the 1990s, it was a daunting task for Nepali entrepreneurs from the minority community who were below a hundred in number to compete with the well-established Indian restaurants in Finland. However, as interview data suggested, pioneering ethnic Nepali restaurateurs skillfully mitigated the culinary and financial challenges and established Nepali ethnic restaurants as a popular South Asian dining destination in Finland. The entrepreneurship of Nepalese immigrants in Finland has been concentrated on niches created by their ethnicity, especially ethnic restaurants and speciality stores are the major areas of concentration. However, the entrepreneurial paradigm of Nepali entrepreneurs in Finland has been gradually broadened and diversified in recent days (NRNA, Finland).

2.3. Culinary Diversity of Nepal

Nature has bestowed Nepal with a wide range of geographical and weather conditions including high-altitude alpine to subtropical climatic conditions. The fertile landscape and diverse environmental and geographic conditions have shaped the Nepali socio-cultural and ethnic-culinary realms. The culinary diversity of Nepal is the result of the country's rich cultural impacts and the resourcefulness of its inhabitants. Nepal is home to one hundred twenty-six ethnic communities and each community has their unique culinary culture. The famous proverb “Khaja Mitho Newari, Khana Mitho Thakali” which translates as Newari lunch is delicious and the Thakali dinner is delicious encapsulates the rich culinary landscapes of Nepal. (Newar and Thakali are ethnic communities of Nepal. The former is indigenous to the Kathmandu valley and the latter is known as agro-pastoral and tribal entrepreneurs popular for their delicious ethnic cuisines (Don Messerschmidt, 1982).

Amidst rich culinary diversity, Dal, Bhat, and Tarkari (Figure 3) stand out as dominant dishes representing the ethnic Nepali culinary landscapes. With the growing transnational

migration of Nepali immigrants worldwide, ethnic Nepali cuisines have also received international recognition.

The figure below depicts the status of Ethnic Nepali/Himalayan cuisine as one of the popular cuisines in the USA.

In 2023, Yelp listed 311 cuisine categories for US restaurants



Source: "The Complete Yelp Business Category List," Yelp, May 4, 2023.

Figure 2 Yelp categories of top 311 cuisines in the USA

Surprisingly, the ethnic Nepali cuisines that are popular in Nepal are rarely found on the menu of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. This intriguing fact piqued and fueled my interest in conducting the present research.

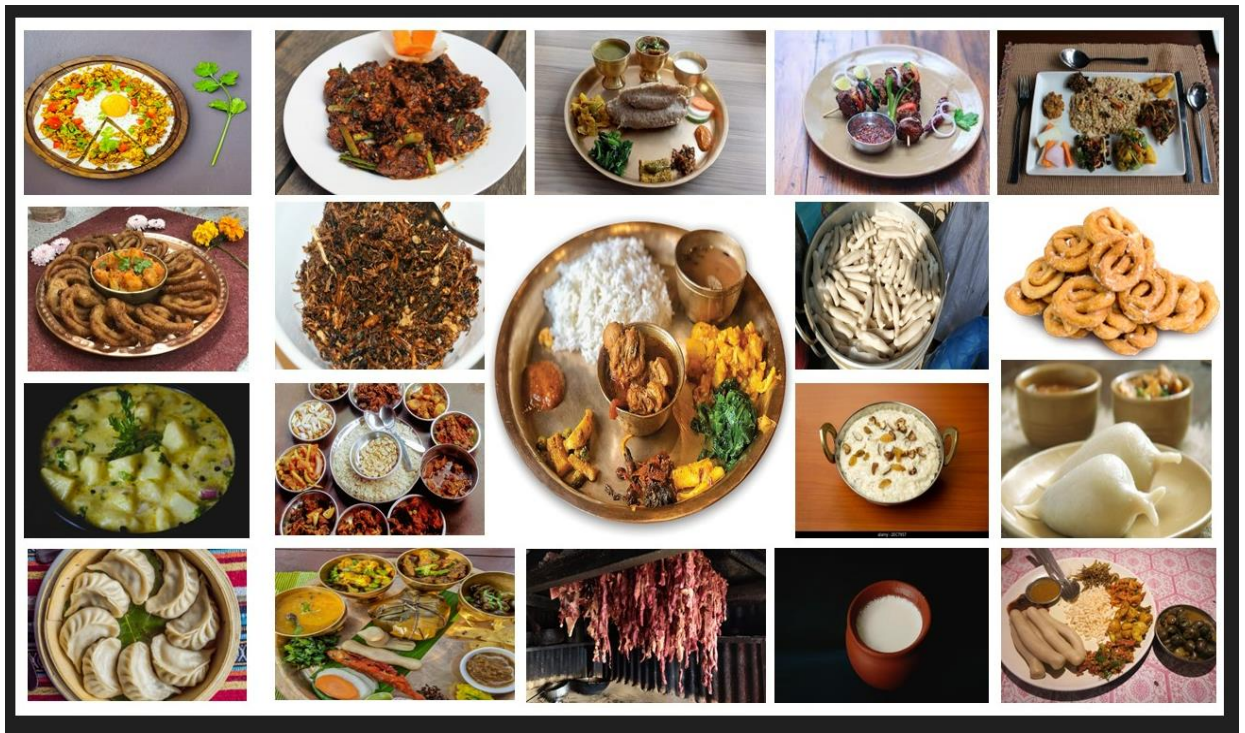


Figure 3, Different Ethnic Nepali Cuisines and Dal, Bhat, and Tarkari at the centre.

2.4. Ethnic Nepali Restaurants and Cross-Cultural Encounter and Exchange

The present research uses ethnic Nepali restaurants as a background of the study because ethnic-themed restaurants have become the second most influential agent of socializing foreign culture after social media. Ethnic restaurateurs are the cultural ambassadors who promote social interaction and cross-cultural exchange by fusing ethnic culinary traditions in the host society (Wood & Muñoz, 2007). Every culinary tradition has some unique characteristics, different recipes, cooking, food preparation techniques, serving, and dining etiquette help to identify the values, and beliefs associated with the culture. Culinary culture and food serve as a powerful cultural identity marker, for example, sushi from Japan, pizza from Italy, hamburgers from the USA etc., have transcended the status of mere food rather they have become iconic symbols that represent the cultural heritage of respective countries and nationalities.

Wahlqvist & Lee (2007, p.2), describe “resources (climate, land, soil, water, and fuel), belief and information (religion, education and literacy, communication), by ethnicity (indigenous or immigrant), by technology (hunting, gathering, agricultural, horticultural, aquacultural,

fishing; food processing and storage, transport, cooking); by colonisation; and by health status and health care etc” as the primary determinant of the food culture. In the context of ethnic Nepali culinary culture in Finland, there is the influence of the various above-mentioned factors that has been reflected in the ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland.

Ethnic entrepreneurs use their ethnic identity as a tool to enhance and strengthen their business. Ethnic restaurants in host settings can play a crucial role in preserving their cultural heritage through ethnic food practices. In today’s globalized world consumers’ culinary experiences have broadened and they are interested in exploring and experiencing the taste of diverse ethnic communities. The expanding market of ethnic food business globally not only reflects people’s craving for different food tastes it also signifies the growing global intercultural awareness in people. The growing intercultural communication among people globally has been beneficial in reducing cultural divides, fostering inclusivity and diversifying the host society.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter briefly discusses the various theoretical frameworks incorporated into the study. First, it elucidates the conceptual distinction between ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. Then it critically analyses the connection between ethnic entrepreneurship, transnational migration and the global flow of ethnoscaples. This chapter is important in examining the relevance of the theoretical development in the field of ethical entrepreneurship to the research questions and objective of the present study.

3.1. Ethnic and Immigrant Entrepreneurship

Ethnic entrepreneurship is taken as an alternative means of integration of minority immigrants in host society it provides employment opportunities for them (Zhou, 1992). Zhou's above remarks take ethnic entrepreneurship closer to the realm of immigration. Similarly, Waldinger et al., also highlight that ethnic entrepreneurship refers to a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national backgrounds or migration experiences (1990). Further, it is seen as immigrants' alternative socio-economic mobility strategy to achieve economic advancement in the host society (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990).

Ethnic entrepreneurship is an inclusive term that includes both immigrant non-native ethnic and Indigenous or native ethnic entrepreneurs however all the aforementioned remarks closely associate ethnic entrepreneurship only with the realm of immigration, these stances on ethnic entrepreneurship ignore the presence of another important group within it which is the entrepreneurs with non-immigrant Indigenous backgrounds.

The Nepali immigrant community in Finland is in the minority status so they view ethnic enterprises as a substantial tool of ethnic identity formation and their sociocultural and economic integration in Finland therefore such enterprises demonstrate strong affinity to the identity issues via their entrepreneurial practices which is reflected in the visual as well as interior, exterior layout décor and ambience of their restaurant which will be further elaborated in data analysis subsection in 6.1. of the present study.

3.2. Ethnic Entrepreneurship, Ethnoscapes and Cultural Identity

Ethnic entrepreneurship is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that integrates theoretical frameworks from diverse disciplines including sociology, intercultural studies, economics, business and entrepreneurship studies etc. The present research relates ethnic entrepreneurship with the transnational migration and global flow of ethnoscapes. By Ethnoscapes, Arjun Appadurai (1990) refers to the dynamic landscape of people that is influenced by the persons who inhabit it. For Appadurai Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, tourists, exiles, workers, and other moving groups and individuals are the key actors who constitute an essential feature of the modern world, and they have significant influence in hitherto socio-cultural realms.

The presence of Nepali and other ethnic restaurants in Finland is the result of the global flow of ethnoscapes that is facilitated by transnational migration. When people leave their homeland and migrate to the host society, they don't leave their identity behind. They carry their culture, traditions, and customs with them. The immigrants in the host society strive to preserve their cultural heritage the involvement of the immigrants in ethnic entrepreneurial activities is not merely enticed by the economic motifs rather there is an inherent play of the quest for identity.

In general, ethnic entrepreneurship refers to activities such as initiating a business, building networks and involving in financial activities based on ethnic/cultural background and heritage. Ethnic entrepreneurship is not a recent phenomenon, the official traces of such enterprises go back to as early as 1880 AD (Barret et al., 1996). However, strengthening of the globalisation and growing transnational human migration have increased scholarly attention on

the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship recently (Zhou, 2004). The concept of ethnic entrepreneurship is complex, intertwined and intersected with various concepts such as culture and ethnicity, language and media, immigration and integration, identity and belongingness etc. DeSoucey (2010) uses the term “gastronationalism” to refer to how ethnic food enterprises promote their gastronomical culture in the host society. The term encompasses the intersection between gastronomy, nationality and identity. Despite being physically and geographically away from their home country ethnic restaurateurs incorporate their native food culture and gastronomic habits in the host setting that symbolises the inherent gastronationalism in their entrepreneurial endeavour.

According to the Britannica Encyclopaedia ethnicity refers to the group of people who share distinct cultural identification and are distinguished in terms of their family life, practices, values, rituals, language, literature, practices, religions, culinary arts, music etc. These elements collectively form a culture and ethnic identity. Ethnicity carries a sense of group belonging which is one of the primary requisites of identity construction. Min Zhou argues that ethnic enterprises refer to businesses where minority immigrants in the host society are the owners, operators, and proprietors of their businesses. Such ethnic minority entrepreneurs’ group membership is shaped by their common cultural heritage or origin and distinguished from the out-group members based on their ethnic traits (Zhou 2004, p.1040).

Ethnic entrepreneurship serves as minority immigrants’ “alternative strategy” to achieve economic advancement in the host society (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990). It is described as immigrants’ alternative socioeconomic mobility strategy to cope with the obstruction on their entry into the local labour market posed by language and cultural barriers, institutional constraints, or racial discrimination (Waldinger, Ward, and Aldrich 1985; Zhou 2004). But this perspective on ethnic entrepreneurship delineates the financial aspect of such phenomena undermining the multifaced characteristics of the concept. Ethnic enterprises run by minority immigrants can have a greater sociocultural impact on the host society. For example, the presence of minority immigrant entrepreneurs from Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean has brought significant socio-cultural changes in the culinary landscape since the post-1965 era (Jiménez & Roesler, 2021, p. 65).

3.3. Globalization of Food and Quest for Authenticity

Food and culinary practices are some of the areas highly impacted by the realms of globalization. Despite having significant nuances in understanding globalization its contribution to the spread and exchange of food culture worldwide cannot be deciphered (Bestor, 2000). The global flow of ethnoscaples has enhanced the cross-cultural exchange of food and culinary traditions. Such a phenomenon has facilitated the emergence of a global food culture. The spread of some popular food chains and beverages such as MacDonald's, Shushi, Burger King, Coca-Cola, and Starbucks etc worldwide are some of the prominent examples that illustrate the prominence of the global food culture. The concept of authenticity is discursively constructed (Monica Heller, 2003) and there are no hard and fast ways to define and understand authenticity in a modern competitive world.

The notion of globalization is often criticised as a homogenizing discourse that erodes cultural diversity and threatens minority ethnic identities (Bosco, J. 1999). The critics of globalisation take it as an imperialist discourse that empowers and enforces mainstream dominant culture (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2000). George Ritzer's popular theory of the McDonaldization of society (1983) supports this argument. The study hypothesises that fusion of the Nepali and Indian cuisines by ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland is the result of globalisation that compels the minority Nepali ethnic restauranteurs to fuse their cuisines with the Indian cuisines because it is popular and familiar among local customers.

But such influence of Indian culture has not been limited to the realm of culinary culture only rather it has significantly influenced the identity construction of minority Nepali ethnic entrepreneurship in Finland as well. Despite having their own unique ethnic/cultural and culinary identity Nepali ethnic restauranteurs in Finland are compelled to infuse their cuisines with Indian cuisine to survive in the local market. Such practice depicts how globalisation reinforces the popular and majority culture over the minority community. The influence of Indian culture is further intensified by the growing presence of Indian media in the South Asian plateau the perspective that sees Nepal as an identical part of India bypasses the unique characteristics of the Nepali culture.

I find the theoretical framework on globalisation is useful to understand its nuances and impact on small-scale minority ethnic Nepali restauranteurs in Finland. Because Nepali

Immigrant restaurateurs take ethnic food practices as an integral part of their identity preservation and identity continuity in Finland. They showcase their ethnic identity through culinary practices. Globalisation has indeed provided ethnic Nepali restaurateurs a productive and creative platform to promote their culinary landscape to global customers but by being submissive toward the popular Indian and global culture.

3.4. Cross-Cultural Adaptation via Culinary Fusion

Young Yun Kim in his article *Cross-cultural Adaptation* talks about the different phases of cross-cultural adaptation an immigrant goes through in the host society. According to him, globalisation has made cross-cultural adaptation and intercultural transformation the “business of our time” (Kim, 2001, p. 234). Kim’s theory of cultural adaptation examines how individuals or groups from different cultural contexts adapt to a new culture. This theory is useful in the present study because it focuses on the interactions between immigrants and the local community as a primary aspect of the cultural adaptation process. Further, this theory is useful to analyse how both the immigrant and the host adapt to each other’s cultural norms, values, and communication styles, leading to successful cross-cultural exchange and communication (Kim, 2017).

Ethnic restaurant markets are expanding due to the increasing demand for global flavours from local consumers (Kim & Jang, 2019). Transnational immigrants have played a key role in branding diverse types of ethnic cuisine worldwide for example Staples in America, Sushi, hamburgers, hotdogs, pizza and bagels were some of the food innovations introduced by the immigrants in respective host countries (Jiménez & Roesler, 2021, p. 64). The first ethnic Nepali restaurant in Finland was opened in Helsinki in 1993 (Source, NRNA, Finland). Within the last three decades, ethnic Nepali restaurants have become popular places to experience and explore ethnic Nepali tastes.

The research respondents expressed that as ethnic Nepali restaurateurs, they have to manage the dual challenges in their entrepreneurial careers. First, it is their moral and ethical responsibility to preserve their cultural identity by maintaining the originality and authenticity of their cuisines. In addition to that they have financial and business pressure that necessitates

them to fuse and adapt their cuisines according to the local market demand and these challenges are intertwined with each other. The latter challenge creates substantial obstacles in maintaining the authenticity of ethnic cuisines. To accommodate these two-fold challenges Nepali ethnic entrepreneurs need to implement diverse strategies.

Kim's idea of deculturation and acculturation is useful for examining the cross-cultural adaptation process of ethnic restaurateurs in host settings. Through the fusion of the cuisines, they adapt their dishes to the local market demand and this phenomenon shows the acculturation of the host culinary culture. Kim's other concern in his theory is to show the internal transformation of the immigrant that leads them to assimilate the host culture. The majority of the research participants admitted that though they are morally concerned about their ethnic culinary culture, they have to address and respect the local customer's dietary requirements and culinary preferences. Kim's theory is primarily targeted at the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants in host society through the process of acculturation and deculturation. However, it is equally applicable to ethnic entrepreneurs with immigrant backgrounds who go through similar phases of cross-cultural adaptation in the host society.

The concepts of deculturation and acculturation are useful in describing how ethnic Nepali restaurateurs adapt their cuisine to the needs of the host society. Deculturation refers to the unlearning of some aspects of one's original culture, whereas acculturation indicates the adoption of some important aspects of a new culture. To adapt their cuisines according to the local market demands and survive in the local culinary market Ethnic Nepali restaurateurs need to maintain a delicate balance between host and source culture. Fusion of ethnic cuisines is one of the reliable methods that help cater for their cuisines as per the local tastes and preferences. In addition to that the ethnic fusion gives them a space to preserve the essence of their culinary culture and enhance their accessibility of the cuisine to the broader audience. Such acts of acculturation and deculturation serve dual purposes first by ensuring their business growth and success and second but also contributing to the diversification of the host society (Kim, 2001).

According to Kim, globalisation facilitates the cross-border movement of people, goods, ideas, and culture. It eases the interaction and cross-cultural encounters and exchange of culture. Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation has some limitations, it emphasises the cross-cultural adaptation of the immigrant as an individual, but it does not specifically talk about the cross-cultural adaptation process of the ethnic entrepreneurs and their strategies to adapt in the host society. The findings of the current study suggest that cross-cultural adaptation of ethnic enterprises follows a similar pattern as described by Kim in his seminal articles (Kim, 2001).

4 METHODOLOGY

Selection of a suitable research methodology in social science research should be a top priority of a researcher because it is necessary to create a holistic understanding of complex social phenomena and reach a trustworthy and reliable research finding. This chapter briefly explains the purpose behind selecting the qualitative approach as a research methodology, semi-structured interviews as a data collection method, thematic analysis (T.A.) as a data analysis method and some important ethical concerns of this study.

4.1. Qualitative Research Methodology

This study investigates the inherent intercultural phenomenon within ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. To address the complex and nuanced nature of the present research, the qualitative approach has been selected as a research methodology. This approach is particularly beneficial in addressing the cultural sensitivity of ethnic Nepali entrepreneurship. The detail-oriented and flexible nature of the qualitative approach suits the nature of the present study. Additionally, the qualitative approach ensures the reliability, trust, and confidentiality of the research process by emphasising the answer to the “Why?”, “What?”, “How?” questions.

Qualitative research helps us to explore the complex social phenomena that quantitative research fails to uncover. Quantitative research is suitable for the statistical analysis and larger sample size, whereas qualitative research contains a purposively elected small sample size

and interpretive analysis (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 16-17). An important feature of qualitative research is that it helps with the in-depth examination of inherent social phenomena. Additionally, it allows researchers to explore the 'significant truths' in people's lives (Baken D, 1996). I find a qualitative research methodology suitable for examining the inherent and in-depth intercultural phenomena that take place within ethnic Nepali restaurants because it is participant-friendly and provides enough space for the research participants to explore themselves.

4.2. Semi-structured Interview

The literal definition of the concept of interview refers to inter-view, an exchange of opinions and ideas between two individuals on a specific theme or a topic of common interest (Kvale, 1996). The study uses semi-structured interviews as a data collection method, one of the popular methods of data collection in social science research (Flick, 2006). The primary rationale behind choosing semi-structured interviews is to promote verbal interaction between the researcher and respondents and capture respondents' subjective experiences, emotions, and perspectives on the investigated topic. However, the semi-structured interview is not limited to that purpose. In addition, it facilitates the interpretation and exploration of these experiences about one another and the contexts from where they originated (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Flexibility, open-endedness, holistic nature, and contextual depth are some of the primary characteristics of semi-standardized interviews where a researcher can be involved in verbal interactions with the respondents, giving room for confrontational questions. The questions in semi-structured interviews can be theory-driven and hypothesis-directed, which can be a valuable guide for the interview (Flick 2006, p. 156).

The semi-structured interviews in this study proved to be a useful tool because they provided respondents with adequate space to explore their experiences, interests, opinions, and perspectives on ethnocultural identity (Kvale, 1996). More significantly, it nurtured two-way interactions between the researcher and participants, resulting in an in-depth understanding of the intercultural phenomena within ethnic restaurant premises.

4.3. Interview Question

Semi-structured interviews are based on themes and questions that guide and encourage participants to converse freely during the interview (Silverman, 2013). While there are no hard and fast rules that require semi-structured to have a fixed list of questions however it is recommended to use the fixed grid of questions to guide the semi-structured interviews. As a semi-structured interview combines the features of both structured and unstructured interviews, the open-ended grid of questions can help explore inherent complex phenomena that shape and guide the interview to the as a guide for the interview. The list of open-ended interview questions in the present study addresses the important phenomena within the ethnic Nepali restaurant.

4.4. Sampling and Data Collection

The current research is based on ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. Hence it necessitates participants with relevant experience in the area being researched. The present research uses snowball and purposive sampling methods as a sampling of the research participants. The participants in the current study were purposively selected to maintain their relevance to the research topic. Purposive sampling helped to reach specific groups of individuals who are involved in the area being researched (Tracy 2019, p. 134). Further, snowball sampling is a non-probability method that assists in reaching the first appropriate respondent identified by the researcher, who helps the researcher to connect to other research participants as needed through referral until the required number of respondents has been fulfilled (Oliver, 2006).

Finding the exact number of research participants representing Nepali ethnic restaurants was initially challenging because such enterprises are geographically scattered and many of the individuals contacted for the research purpose were reluctant to participate. Some participants even withdrew in the middle of the data collection due to various reasons. The researcher used personal connections and even visited some ethnic Nepali restaurants as a customer for research purposes.

The study draws on data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 9 representatives of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Jyvaskyla and Helsinki. These interviews were conducted

between February 10, 2024, and March 20, 2024. Phone, email, messenger, and WhatsApp were used for the recruitment process of the research participants. The following table details participants' experiences, roles, and responsibilities in their respective restaurants.

Table 1, Description of the participants' experience and roles.

Participant	Experience	Role
P1	10 years	Owner/waiter
P2	1 year	Waiter
P3	1.5 year	Waiter
P4	5 years	Owner/chef
P5	12 years	Chef
P6	9 years	Owner/waiter
P7	11 years	Chef
P8	10 years	Owner/chef
P9	15 years	Owner/Manager

The study has employed participants with diverse experiences, roles, and positions in different ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. Out of nine participants, five were the owners and co-owners of ethnic Nepali restaurants with more than ten years of experience in the field. The other two respondents had recently relocated to Finland and worked as waiters. The remaining two have been working as chefs for the past decades. Among the nine participants, five had approximately ten years of work experience in the field, one had five years of experience, and the other two had one and a half years of experience in ethnic Nepali restaurants. Additionally, four out of the nine research participants have worked in more than one city in Finland. To ensure the diversity and reliability of the data, the researcher has selected research participants from two different cities, Jyvaskyla, and Helsinki.

Seven out of the nine research participants came to Finland on work permits and had previous connections to the ethnic culinary profession whereas the other two did not have prior ties to the ethnic food business. The two groups of participants exhibited varying levels of experience and expertise in the field. The first group consisted of individuals who came to Finland as an ethnic Nepali cook, had approximately decade-long experience in the field showed a

relatively higher level of intercultural awareness. Three out of Seven from the first group of participants had a master's level of education the level of education also had a significant impact on the intercultural skills and abilities. The data analysis indicates that the level and background of education, experiences, age, and various factors have a significant impact on the conceptualisation of intercultural communication and competence and its importance in ethnic restaurant business.

Due to the nature of the study, face-to-face interviews and physical observations of the restaurant premises were prioritized. During the interview, the researcher observed and examined the layout, decoration, ambience, music, dishes, and crockeries used in the preparation, presentation of food, greeting and hospitality toward customers and their reactions, and serving of the cuisines in the restaurant premises. The emphasis on face-to-face interviews instead of Zoom or virtual interviews proved helpful in exploring the intercultural phenomena enhanced by the physical and visual arrangement of ethnic Nepali restaurant premises. Seven out of nine interviews were conducted face-to-face on restaurant premises. The interviews were conducted in Nepali language which is the mother language of the research participants. The purpose of choosing the mother language was to create a smooth and spontaneous flow of information, opinions, experiences, ideas, and emotions of the participants.

Transcription of the audio recordings is a common practice in qualitative research (Tracy, 2019). Transcription is a process of converting recorded audio or spoken words, into a written form to analyse a specific phenomenon or event (Duranti, 2006). The interview in the present research was conducted in the Nepali language which required a translation into English. Before the translation of the interview data, all the audio recordings were transcribed using an intelligent transcription method.

Due to the length of the interview data, it was not feasible to transcribe the interview data word by word including the fillers and pauses, hesitations and false starts therefore, interview audios were transcribed using an intelligent verbatim transcription method, where occasional fillers were omitted, and grammatical errors were fixed. After the interview, audio recordings were transcribed, carefully read, and studied to comprehend them as 'things in themselves' (Denscombe, 2007, p.77).

4.5. Data Analysis Method

Like semi-structured interviews as a popular data collection method in qualitative research, thematic data analysis is a widely used tool to analyse qualitative data; however, there have not been significant scholarly endeavours to define it as a method of qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

This research uses qualitative research methodology, and unlike quantitative research methodology, the data collected through this approach is in-depth, complex, and unstructured; therefore, such data need rigorous, precise, and careful analysis to understand the nuances and complexities inherent in the phenomenon. The rationale behind choosing thematic analysis (T.A.) as a data analysis method is the flexibility it offers. Owing to the complex and unstructured nature of the interview data, the researcher analysed the data manually by applying the thematic data analysis method. Thematic data analysis is a qualitative research method that helps to organize and analyse complex and intricate qualitative datasets. It aims to explore the extensive themes capable of expressing the narratives inherent in a complex dataset. This method helps to examine the identification of themes through repeated scrutiny of transcribed data (King, 2004).

Thematic data analysis offers theoretical flexibility and helps identify, describe, and interpret specific themes and patterns within datasets. This method fits with a qualitative study that aims to address complex and intricate research questions that require subjective responses characterized by personal views, experiences, and perceptions (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Another important reason for applying thematic data analysis is to reduce the influence of individual biases, prejudices, and prior knowledge and maintain objectivity in the data analysis. As both the researcher and the respondent share common cultural and ethnic origins, it is essential to maintain objectivity in the dataset. The thematic data analysis approach helps maintain the objectivity of the data by carefully reading and spotlighting interesting information and themes and examining them regarding the research questions.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

Maintaining research ethics is a crucial aspect of this research process. Ethics refers to the set of conduct that helps researchers determine what is right and wrong and what they ought to do (Bos, 2020). Ethics refers to the values and norms that provide an ethical framework to the researcher during the data collection process. All ethical and institutional requirements needed before, during, and after the research were fulfilled. All the participants were sent a research notification informing the nature of the study, voluntary participation and a right to withdraw from the research anytime. Written approval to participate in the research was obtained from all participants in the form of a consent letter.

Given that the present research revolves around sensitive topics such as cultural identity, the authenticity of ethnic cuisines, conflicts of interest caused by globalization, and challenges faced by ethnic minority entrepreneurs including their intercultural communication strategies it was crucial to ensure that the research respects the cultural sensitivities of the research participants and causes no risk, harm, and negative consequences to them individually and to their ethnic entrepreneurial efforts.

In the present research maintaining neutrality and critical distance between the researcher and participants, who share a common ethnic cultural background, has remained one of the central ethical concerns throughout the research. Substantial precautions have been taken to ensure that the respondents can explore themselves freely and spontaneously during the interview. The researcher has acted like a solicitor and accepted the role of interviewees as informants. Given the researcher and respondent share a common cultural background significant concerns were taken to minimize the influence of the researcher's presuppositions, prior knowledge, and experience on the interview to avoid data appropriation.

Maintaining the confidentiality of the research participants is another important ethical concern during the research process. Since the research revolves around culturally sensitive and vulnerable issues like ethnic culinary entrepreneurship maintaining the confidentiality of the research participants and their entrepreneurship was a very critical task. To maintain the confidentiality of the research participants the researcher has anonymized the research participants and presented them with numerical identity in the data analysis.

All the face-to-face interviews were conducted inside the ethnic Nepali restaurant premises. The researcher has ensured the data protection and confidentiality of the research participants during the interviews. All the Zoom interviews were conducted with the official Zoom accounts and interviews were audio recorded and stored in safe audio recording devices to avoid data breaches. The interviews were conducted in the mother language of the research participants. To ensure the reliability of the interview data and ease the data analysis process interview recordings were transcribed using the intelligent verbatim transcription method. All the parts of the recordings that included the information relevant to the research have been transcribed carefully to avoid data appropriation. After the transcriptions, the data was translated into English. The data collected during the research process is saved in a safe device and it will be destroyed and deleted when the research is finalized.

5. ANALYSIS

The present chapter presents the thematic analysis of the data derived from the semi-structured interview with the nine representatives of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. The thematic analysis of that data suggests important research findings. It illustrates that the minority immigrants' involvement in the ethnic food business not only increases their employability in the host society rather it serves various other purposes. However, the phenomenon comprises both opportunities and challenges. Overall, there were five themes repeated and recurred throughout the interview: 1. Identity awareness as a source of motivation 2. Identity construction and the manifestation of cultural nostalgia via culinary business 3. Nuances of Globalization and fusion of ethnic cuisines 4. Authenticity of ethnic cuisines and its impact on cultural identity 5. Impact of cultural differences and language barriers in the intercultural relationship between restaurateurs and their clients.

The diagram below presents the key theme of the interview data and its explanation.

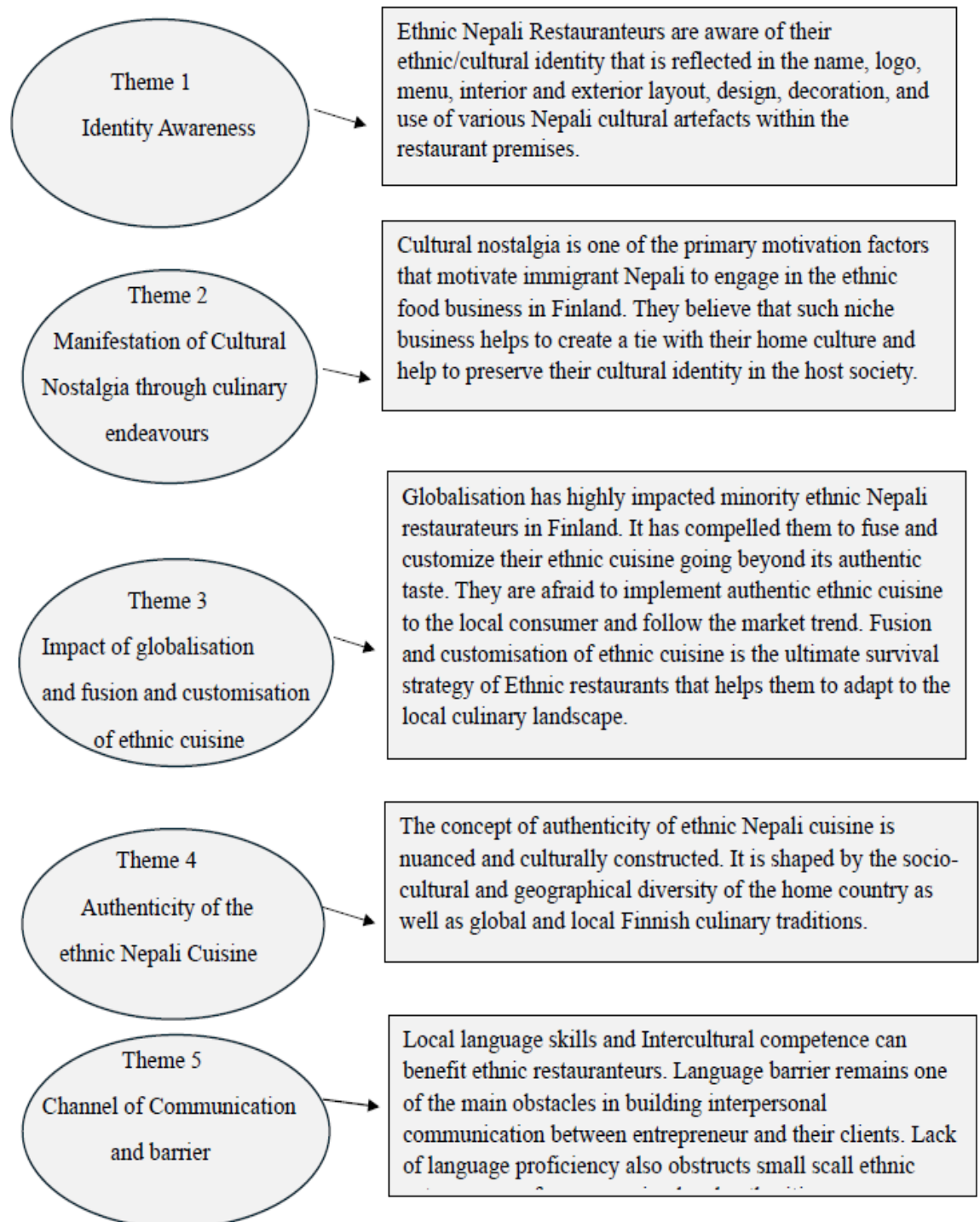


Figure 5, Dominant themes of the interview data

5.1. Identity Awareness as a Key Motivational Factor

The term identity refers to an individual's sense of who they are and the self-descriptions which they believe as important and valuable (Barret et al., 2013). Cultural identity is very vital for ethnic restaurateurs because it helps preserve their cultural roots, differentiate their business from other ethnic businesses, and create a sense of belongingness and community. One of the important recurring themes during the interview was the concept of identity. The respondents who had prior connections to the ethnic food business in Nepal were motivated to join the ethnic Nepali food business in business in Finland due to the opportunity it offers them. They highlighted that it was not just an employment opportunity rather it was the opportunity to promote their ethnic culinary heritage. It was found that necessity motivational factors worked for those who happened to join the ethnic Nepali food business due to the necessity and unavailability of other opportunities in Finland. Many of the research participants have a prior connection to the ethnic Nepali restaurant business, they take it as an opportunity to construct and promote their cultural identity in the host country.

The research participants expressed diverse opinions on culinary originality and the fusion of cuisines and its impact on their cultural identity. Some of them were highly concerned about the impact of culinary fusion on their culinary traditions and their cultural identity in the long term. Participant Five stated,

As an ethnic restaurateur, we must cling to the originality of our cuisines because it is one of the primary determinants of our cultural identity. We should be ready to give up a little bit of our business profit and reduce the extent of fusion of our ethnic cuisines (Participant Five).

The moderate viewpoint highlighted the importance of balancing the preservation of their culinary identity by addressing the needs of local customers and maintaining authenticity as much as possible. They viewed both their culinary identity and addressing local customer needs as equally important to survive as an ethnic food enterprise in Finland. The final opinion of the respondent consisted of a genuine business perspective that undermined the quests of identity and preservation of the authenticity of ethnic cuisines rather it reinforced that as a business firm, Nepali restaurants' first duty should be to satisfy their customers' needs and preferences.

5.1.1. Cultural Nostalgia and Identity Construction Via Ethnic Food Business.

Throughout the interviews, the participating restaurateurs brought up the idea that the ethnic food business is a substantial means of their upward social mobility. Simultaneously, it acts as a tool of cultural identity construction often expressed in the form of cultural nostalgia. Many of the respondents of the interview implicated that ethnic culinary practices in the host society encompass the therapeutic significance in their lives, it connects them with their cultural roots and helps in the construction of ethnic identity and economic well-being. For many of them, these are the prime motivational factors for them to engage in the ethnic food business.

Some scholars have argued that ethnic and cultural differences do not always pose a negative consequence on ethnic entrepreneurship, rather such differences can be utilized as a marketing and business strategy for ethnic-themed enterprises (García-Cabrera et al., 2020), however, the interview data revealed that such differences crucially impact the social positioning of minority ethnic Nepali entrepreneurs. Further, their belonging to a minority community poses a severe identity crisis for them. However, it was observed that respondents have formulated various strategies to overcome such identity threats. The physical observation of the Nepali restaurant premises in the list demonstrated that the ethnic themes of the restaurant act as an important tool for the construction of identity and creating a sense of cultural belongingness.

Ethnic-themed restaurants occupy substantial positions in the hospitality industry, yet the effectiveness of the ethnic-theming of such food outlets is still a matter of debate (Ebster & Guist, 2005). According to many research participants, the use of the ethnic name, logo, exterior and interior décor, layout, ambience, use of music, colour combination, crockeries and utensils etc represent their ethnic cultural identity. On the rationale behind choosing Nepali nomenclature for their food business, Participant Four remarked,

“The ethnic name of our restaurant helps to make us different from others; it represents our cultural identity in Finland. And our customers say that they like the theme behind the name of our restaurant” (Participant Four).

The nomenclatures used for identifying ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland have distinct ethnic, cultural, historical, geographical, and religious significance. Some examples of such nomenclatures in ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland are Base Camp, Nagarkot, The Gurkha,

Satkar, Parikar, Nepali Chulho, Kantipur, Mountain, Mount Everest etc., and each of these words and phrases have strong cultural resonance to Nepal. The use and choice of such nomenclature serves dual purposes. Firstly, such exotic and unfamiliar names, make a unique impression on culturally different customers. It allures and psychologically appeals to non-ethnic customers, arouses their curiosity, and motivates them to explore and experience the cuisine and culture associated with it. The second and most important purpose such a strategy serves is to create a sense of belongingness to their ethnic group. According to the social identity theorists Tajfel and Turner, group membership and belongingness play a crucial role in group identity formation (1986). For minority ethnic entrepreneurs' ethnic identity plays a crucial role in their social positioning in the host society. Ethnic restaurants do not just serve ethnic cuisine to their customers, rather they engage in the ethnic culinary activities that help in their ethnic identity construction in the host society (Phinney, 1990).

Concerning the sense of belonging to a cultural root through the ethnic food business Participant Six remarked,

I chose the ethnic Food business because it helps me to connect with my cultural/ethnic roots. Despite being in a foreign land I feel connected to my culture. We all brothers are in the ethnic food business, and I willingly chose to be a chef because it creates a sense of belongingness within me” (Participant Six).

Similar to the names ethnic Nepali restaurants employ logos that use Nepali cultural, geographical, and religious landmarks. Many respondents emphasized the importance of such visual elements from their subjective perspective. Through the observation of the Four ethnic Nepali restaurant premises, the researcher observed that each restaurant has employed diverse ways of décor, colour combinations and ambience to reflect Nepali culture as much as possible.

In the question why do you use ethnic Nepali cultural artefacts in your restaurant premises? Participant One responded,

“Such visual arrangement serves various purposes first is to create a unique layout to appeal to the customer, it has aesthetic importance, and it helps us to create a mini-Nepal within our restaurant premises” (Participant One)



Figure 6 Exterior layout of Basecamp Nepali Restaurant, Jyväskylä



Figure: 7, Interior of ethnic Nepali restaurant

Many of the ethnic restaurants, where research participants are engaged, have employed musical instruments like “Madal” (Figure 9) (a Nepali folk instrument which is similar to the western drum) and “Sarangi” (Figure 10) (Nepali folk musical instrument which is closer to the Western violin) as decorative objects. In the answer to the question, what purpose does such ethnic theming serve and how do local customers perceive it? Participant One replied,

“Our entire restaurant is designed with an ethnic Nepali theme that represents our cultural heritage and identity. Our customers come here not just to taste our meal hmm... besides that, they come here to see, explore, and experience Nepali culture and we see many of our customers are very much interested in the cultural artefacts we have used as decoration. Such cultural specimen makes a deeper impression on our customers” (Participant One).

During the observation of ethnic restaurants and conversations with research participants, it was found that many participants have imported such cultural remnants from Nepal. It was found that some of them have even imported handcrafted wooden furniture to provide their restaurants' premises the exotic and ethnic looks. They have also brought the hand-crafted Nepali traditional wooden window which is called Anghi Jhyal in Nepali and Tiki Jhya in Nepal Bhasha (Newari Language) which comprises religious-cultural significance in Nepali (Figure 8), statues of Lord Buddha and different Hindu Gods and Goddesses to create a cultural replication in their restaurant premises.

Many of the research participants gave similar responses on the importance of such visual arrangements of their restaurant premises. They emphasized that the use of cultural artefacts does not only serve aesthetic purposes rather they serve educational and informative purposes. Such artefacts help to inform and educate their clients about the customs, traditions, and origin of the culture they represent. The cultural objects and artefacts used as visual decoration create curiosities in the customers about the object. Participant Five said that their customers often ask about the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the portraits, statues and other artefacts they have employed in their restaurant.

Participant One referenced the Thangka painting to demonstrate how it served the informative purpose and how the display of Buddhist cultural artefacts became an object that helped to spread the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the Thangka painting in Nepali culture.

Thangka painting represents Buddhism, looking at Thangka paintings many customers ask us if we are Buddhist. Because many of them say that Thangka is from Thailand then why it is used in Nepali restaurants? Many of our customers even do not know that Buddha was born in Nepal and Thangka is common for both Buddhists and Hindus

in Nepal. Such artefacts also promote intercultural communication between us and our clients (Participant One).

The ethnic theme employed in the ethnic Nepali restaurants showcases Nepali cultural heritage. Beyond the aesthetic appeal such arrangement also represents respect, warmth of hos-



Figure 8 handcrafted Aankhi Jhyal



Figure 9 Dhol



Figure 10 Sarangi

pitably, and service ethos that is an inalienable part of Nepali culture. Participant Nine highlighted the role of such themes in making them different from other similar ethnic restaurants in the field. He further remarked,

The Ethnic theme of Nepali restaurants in Finland makes us different from others and it makes the dining experience of the customer unique and authentic. When you dine in a typical ethnic Nepali restaurant themed with Nepali cultural artifacts you feel like you are in Nepal. This is the purpose of all this visual arrangement. For some people, it may be useless but most of our customer like it and it play a significant role in determining their identity in Finnish society (Participant Nine).

As every culture has some unique characteristics the ethnic Nepali restaurateurs operated by the participant have employed different strategies to differentiate them from other ethnic restaurateurs. It is common human nature to be different and unique from others. The participant of the study also highlighted that being different in terms of cuisines, visual layouts and hospitality enhances the chances of their business success.

5.2. Fusion of Nepali and Indian Cuisines

According to Participant Nine, the earlier generation of ethnic Nepali restaurateurs were Indian chefs who fused Nepali and Indian cuisine. He iterated that though such fusion was dominated by Indian culinary practices and guided by the profit orientation of the earlier Nepali food entrepreneurs in the field, it was an ultimate survival strategy for them because during that time the local customers in Finland were well acquainted with the Indian ethnic cuisines due to their availability in the local market and global popularity. And customers are often reluctant and hesitant to try new and unfamiliar cuisines (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Hence, it was not surprising that minority ethnic restaurant entrepreneurs chose the strategy to safeguard their business. They felt it safe to fuse Indian and Nepali cuisines because in business profit is always the priority.

Respondent Eight emphasized the fusion of Nepali and Indian cuisines in those early days,

“From the business perspective, it was the survival strategy because back then very few people in Finland knew about Nepal and Nepali dishes consequently ethnic fusion was necessary in those early days (Participant 8).

Many participants emphasized the necessity of the fusion of ethnic cuisine from a profit-oriented perspective and they did not see ethnic fusions as a threat to their culinary heritage in Finland. Even though their culinary practices in Finland differ significantly from the authentic culinary traditions of their homeland, many of the respondents boosted their success in establishing a unique Nepali culinary culture in Finland which is an authentic Nepali ethnic cuisine for them.

Even though culinary fusion is a common global practice, ethnic Nepali restaurants confront an allegation that they serve replicas of Indian cuisines. All the respondents contended the allegations as superficial and without contextual base. They argue that those who make such accusations are unaware of the rich ethnic-cultural diversity, and typological and geographical structure of Nepal. According to them such accusations promote cultural biases and create prejudices.

Regarding the Nepali ethnic culinary diversity and fusion of Indian and Nepali ethnic cuisines, Respondent Nine gave a brief response,

Nepal is a South Asian country that is bordered by India and China; thus, the Nepali culinary landscape is influenced by the culinary culture of its both neighbours

to some extent. Thus, Nepalese culinary tradition offers a mix of Indian, Tibetan and mainland Chinese as well as Asian culinary traditions. Nepal has a very old “Roti Beti ko Sambandha” with India so in that sense it is very common to have some common cuisines in both ethnic Nepali and Indian restaurants.

“Roti Beti ko Sambandh” is a popular proverb often used to refer to the socio-cultural ties between Nepal and India. It means that Nepal and India have an agelong ‘Roti’ which means bread in Nepali and Hindi language which is a symbolic representation of the common culinary culture India and Nepal share. Similarly, the word “Beti” means daughter in the Hindi language which is commonly spoken in the lowland terai of Nepal which borders India. The use of the word Beti in this proverb indicates the marital relationship between Nepal and India which is believed to have continued since the Ramayana era.

Above mentioned quotes of Participant Nine highlighted that the cuisines served in ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland are not mere mimicry of Indian cuisine, but it is the product of cross-cultural culinary exchange between Nepal and India that has been in practice in the region for centuries. Nepali restaurants in Finland have been following the same trend.

Many Participants in the interview viewed ethnic fusion as an inevitable survival strategy for ethnic Nepali food enterprises however respondent Five deviated from the aforementioned thoughts and contended that,

“I am not satisfied with whatever is going on inside ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. The way we tailor and customise our ethnic cuisine will have negative consequences on the authenticity of our ethnic cuisine which will impact our cultural identity also. The upcoming generation of Nepali immigrants in Finland will have a distorted image of the ethnic Nepali culinary landscape” (Participant Five).

The above excerpts from Participant Five demonstrated the deep identity concern and worry that the extensive culinary fusion of ethnic Nepali cuisines practised in Finland. The identity concern of Participant Five is targeted to the culinary fusion where mainstream Indian cuisines have dominated the ethnic Nepali culinary realms in Finland.. Participant Seven also presented dissatisfaction with the culinary fusion pioneered by the earlier ethnic Nepali restaurateurs. According to him,

Though it was a little riskier from a business perspective, they had a good opportunity to introduce authentic Nepali food to the local customers, but they were afraid and did not like to take risks. And this is true also why someone would take risks if there were easy options available? (participant 7).

At present Nepalese ethnic restaurants have become one of the popular ethnic dining destinations in Finland that serve the fusion of Nepali and Indian dishes. From the business perspective such fusion is justifiable and practical but Nepali cultural veterans who are concerned about the perseverance of the authenticity and originality of the ethnic culinary culture are worried about the impact of such practice.

Pioneer ethnic food entrepreneurs realized the need to customize and create a fusion of their ethnic dishes to address the local customer's dietary requirements as well as to adapt their cuisine to the demands of local culinary landscapes. Such fusion is very common in the modern global era. Therefore, ethnic Nepali restaurants are not alone in the race for fusion and customisation of ethnic cuisine.

Almost all the research participants interviewed so far have accepted that though their restaurant is known and called a Nepali restaurant many cuisines in their Menu can be found in other similar Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi ethnic restaurants in Finland. This phenomenon is universal. Participant Four remarked that it is challenging to enforce authentic Nepali ethnic cuisine with original flavour and aroma to the local customers. He further said.

“In Finland local customers like to eat meat as soft as cotton ...[smiles] But some of our Newari cuisine such as “Sukuti” and “Taas” (dried, roasted, and deep-fried meat) are hard. Sometimes it is stone hard [laughs] and has to be chewed for a long time and such dishes are often rejected by the local customers, therefore, the fusion of cuisine is essential to survive in the local market” (participant Four).

He provided an example of a Nepali restaurant that was opened in the greater Helsinki area to offer authentic Newari food (A famous variant of Ethnic Nepalese cuisine from the Kathmandu region) to the local customers, but they had to shut down within a month because the local customer did not enjoy the unfamiliar taste and hard texture of the roasted and deep-fried meat that is common in many of the Nepali ethnic cuisines.

In the question of why their cuisine differs from the cuisine prepared in the traditional Nepali kitchen, Participant One answered that making a fusion of their cuisines is not their desire but rather their compulsion. He tried to justify it through an example.

Once we applied Timur ... (A variety of wild pepper also known as Sichuan Pepper but has a slightly different flavour and texture and is usually found in the higher Himalayan region of Nepal) in some of our cuisines to give authenticity because it is used in ethnic Nepali dishes, but our customers did not like the flavour and its numbing effect. We also tried to include another typical Nepali Tomato and

Coriander Chutney in our cuisine instead of the Indian flavour Mango Chutney, but we did not receive good feedback from customers. It is difficult to change the habits of customers and we cannot force our preferences on our customers” (participant One).

All the interviewed participants acknowledged that various factors hinder them from serving authentic Nepali cuisine. The primary challenge is their need to address the gastronomical habits of the local customer which is very essential to survive in the local culinary market. The second is the availability of fresh, authentic, and exact ingredients, spices, and materials which are integral to ethnic Nepali cuisines. The rich biodiversity of Nepal has been bestowed with fresh and organic spices, herbs, and seasonings. When such ingredients are imported to Finland, the time taken during the transit and transport causes it to lose its freshness and natural taste. Moreover, in traditional Nepali kitchens foods are prepared using natural firewood ovens which give smoke-flavoured in the cuisines which is difficult to replicate with gas and electric ovens.

Further, to integrate and compete into the local food industry ethnic restaurateurs have to customize and localize their products and services according to local customer’s dietary needs, gastronomical habits, and local market demands, and such fusion is inevitable to understand the specificity of the local market (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). The process of customisation and fusion of the cuisine is an important aspect of the localization of such cuisine amidst the broader globalization framework. Besides the fusion of cuisine, the interior and exterior décor and spatial layout, ambience, music, hospitality, crockeries, food serving, and presentation styles of the ethnic restaurants are some of the very important components that promote cross-cultural exchange between the entrepreneurs and consumers.

5.3. Authenticity and Quest of Identity

The concept of authenticity itself is subjective and fluid (Peterson, 2005) and discursively constructed (Monica Heller, 2003) The meaning of authenticity differs in different fields. In the context of ethnic cuisines authenticity refers to originality and uniqueness Research findings suggest that there is no fixed criterion to determine the authenticity of ethnic Nepali cuisine. What someone tastes as authentic Nepali cuisine can be unauthentic for the other. Various factors affect the authenticity of ethnic Nepali cuisine. The climatic conditions and geography

where the food crops are grown, cooking and preparing styles, time and mood of the ethnic cooks cooking, the availability of fresh and authentic ingredients etc are some of the prime factors that play vital roles in determining the authenticity of the ethnic cuisines.

The discussion on the authenticity of ethnic Nepali cuisine revealed that it is a highly debated, equally nuanced, and complex topic. Though maintaining of authenticity of ethnic cuisine was taken as an important milestone in preserving the ethnic Nepali identity by almost all the research participants at the same time they have conceptualized that there exist various challenges in maintaining authenticity, as it is understood in general, especially for the immigrant Nepali entrepreneurs in the host country.

Participant Six remarked,

The authenticity of ethnic Nepali is a complex topic because what is authentic for person A can be unauthentic for person B. If we only focus on authenticity there is no space for creativity, innovation, and improvement in the quality of our food. Our cuisine combines the features of both Nepali and Indian tastes and most importantly it addresses the needs of local customers which is essential for business success.

The above remarks of Participant One illustrate his concern about authenticity, but at the same time, he also indicates his limitations as a minority ethnic entrepreneur and the nuances of the concept of authenticity. Thus, he is not satisfied with the way people judge the authenticity of ethnic Nepali dishes.

The research participants demonstrated their worries about the oversimplification and generalization of the ethnic Nepali culinary practice in Finland. They highlighted that each ethnic culinary tradition has unique attributes, the different recipes, cooking, preparing techniques, serving, dining and hospitality help to identify the values, customs and beliefs associated with the particular culture. Food and cuisine work as an important identity marker of culture and nationality associated with it, for example, Sushi from Japan, Pizza from Italy, and Hamburgers from the USA have become cultural symbols of the respective countries and nationalities. So, oversimplification and overgeneralization of ethnic culinary practices should be avoided, and evaluation of ethnic food practices should be carried out from unbiased and unprejudiced perspectives, not from the perspective of the dominant culture.

Many respondents argued that the authenticity of ethnic cuisines is affected by many factors where cultural and geographical influences cannot be undermined. Ethnic Nepali restaurants have been able to establish themselves as a popular ethnic dining destination in Finland however preserving the authenticity and originality of ethnic Nepali cuisine is indeed becoming

challenging for them because of the cultural and geographical influence and popularity of Indian culinary tradition worldwide.

According to Participant Nine during the 70s and 80s Indian restaurants dominated the South Asian culinary landscape in Finland. However, the early 90s brought a paradigm shift in the South Asian culinary spheres in Finland. According to respondent Nine, in the early 1990s, Finnish local customers were unfamiliar with Nepal and ethnic Nepali cuisines, in that context, introducing new ethnic cuisine was a risk-laden effort from the business perspective. Because customers are often reluctant and hesitant to try new and unfamiliar cuisine (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Therefore, the pioneer ethnic Nepali restaurateurs fused Nepali and Indian cuisines according to local customer preferences. They blended the best elements of both cuisines to create a menu that was neither truly Nepali nor Indian but rather a fusion. This fusion menu is still used by most of the ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland today.

Though Respondent Five was critical of the pioneer Nepali restaurateurs, Participant Nine paid tribute to them because he believed that they performed an immense struggle, hard work, perseverance, and dedication for the ethnic branding of Nepali cuisine in Finland. He added that it is the result of their contribution, that Nepali ethnic restaurants have been successful in representing the South Asian culinary niche market in Finland. According to him, this was the greatest culinary triumph of the pioneering ethnic Nepali restaurateurs in a foreign setting. He exclaimed, the result is in front of us within just two decades or less the number of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland has reached more than one hundred fifty.

5.4. Factors that attract Local Customers to Ethnic Nepali Restaurants

The previous section demonstrated the identity awareness of the respondents here this subchapter emphasises if there is any influence of cultural factors in attracting local customers to ethnic Nepali restaurants. The discussion consists of mixed opinions on the importance of cultural factors in attracting local customers to ethnic Nepali restaurants. Many of the respondents admitted that the majority of the customers in ethnic Nepali restaurants are from non-ethnic Nepali backgrounds and as every customer has their distinct choices and preferences different factors work differently for every customer.

According to the research data, customers in ethnic Nepali restaurants can be categorized into three groups. The first and largest group consists of non-ethnic Nepali customers who visit ethnic Nepali restaurants occasionally and are unfamiliar with Nepali cuisines and tastes. The second group consist of non-ethnic Nepali customers who visit Nepali restaurants regularly and have limited knowledge and information about authentic Nepali ethnic cuisine and tastes, some of the customers in this group have even visited Nepal either before or after visiting a Nepali restaurant. The last group of customers comprises ethnic Nepali customer who has higher demands for authenticity and originality of the cuisines. According to the research participants, the primary focus of the ethnic Nepali restaurant lies in the first and second groups of customers because the third group of customers are relatively limited in Finland due to the small Nepali ethnic community in Finland.

While explaining the reason behind the popularity of the Nepali ethnic restaurant in Finland Participant Nine argued that though Finland and Nepal differ drastically in terms of socio-cultural, economic-political and geographical sense there are some cultural connections between Finland and Nepal. For him, Nepali and Finnish people resemble each other in different parameters. He remarked that honesty, hard work, and respect for other people are the basic characteristics of Finnish people which resemble Nepali people. He remarked that the customers in his restaurants often gave positive responses about their hospitable service, hard work, humbleness and honesty.

Despite all the research participants providing mixed opinions regarding the factors responsible for attracting local customers to dine in their restaurants, all the respondents agree that the hospitality and customer service in such restaurants is one of the prime factors behind their success in Finland. Many of the respondents linked this virtue of ethnic Nepali restaurants to the Nepali cultural trait that is also reflected in the popular Sanskrit proverb “Atithi Debo Bhaba” which is commonly uttered in Nepal. Concerning the importance of such good virtues in their business Respondent Eight said,

“I can assure you that ethnic Nepali restaurants have the best in terms of hospitality and polite service, and this is why they are doing good in the ethnic food business. This is from our ethnic and cultural schooling. I think no one can be taught to be polite and humble overnight it is the culture that has taught us to be humble and polite” (participant Eight).

Respondent One also opines similar to the above,

“humility, polite and hospitable service is a very important element of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland, our customers always appreciate our politeness and the way we serve them. It is our culture to treat our guests as God. I think this cultural characteristic has greatly helped us to secure professional success in Finland (participant One).

The majority of the restaurateurs stated that many of their customers who visit them regularly are familiar with the tastes, aromas, and delicacies of cuisines served in Nepali restaurants in Finland and many of them have visited Nepal already. Such circumstances might help create a connection between Nepali restaurants in Finland and the local customers however there is not enough evidence if such a connection can be labelled as a cultural connection.

Despite all the above respondents' arguments, there is another equally powerful opinion that questions the so-called cultural connection and valorises other factors. Participant One deviated from the above arguments and claimed that,

I don't think there is anything like cultural connections that attract the local customers to our restaurants rather it is price, our multi-dish meals and big portions are some of the important factors (Participant One)

According to Participant One, the majority of the customers in ethnic Nepali restaurants are from the middle class and believe that the price is the most important for them. He further asserted that the portion of their meal is relatively big, and inclusive which is not available in other ethnic restaurants. The above-mentioned argument of Respondent One raises a question mark on what is believed as a cultural connection between ethnic Nepali restaurants and local clients. because cultural factors might work for those customers who are cultural enthusiasts and are interested in experiencing multicultural food, but according to him, the number of such customers is very limited.

5.5. The Cultural Differences and Language Barriers

Language and culture are intimately associated entities; hence, language is the carrier of the culture. Language barrier significantly impacts the cross-cultural adaptation of the immigrant in the host culture (Berry, 2005). Fatini (2009) views intercultural competence as an ability required for effective and appropriate interaction with people who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself. In the context of ethnic entrepreneurs, a lack of proficiency

in the local language can impact intercultural competence resulting in the gap between the entrepreneurs and the clients. Hence, local language ability is crucial to bridge the cultural gap and establish effective communication with clients and local communities.

The empirical data derived from the in-depth interview and observation suggest that the inability to communicate in Finnish has caused significant negative consequences to the respondents' business. Examining the impact of the language barrier in the present study proved useful to explore the dynamics of intercultural communication its challenges and the adoption of advertisement strategies by research participants in their ethnic restaurants.

Ethnic entrepreneurship is defined as an alternative economic strategy for immigrants whose employment opportunities in the host setting are obstructed by language barriers and institutional complexities (Liu-Farrer & Tamang, 2023). Immigrants who leave their homeland and migrate to the host society face various challenges while adapting to the host environment (Kim, 2017). The research findings suggest that cultural differences and the language barrier have caused several obstacles to respondent's business motivation and growth. As a result, they fail to comprehend local policies, rules, regulations, taxation systems and various entrepreneur assistance programs run by the government. Lack of Finnish proficiency hinders smooth communication between entrepreneurs and clients. The importance of proper communication in the realms of ethnic entrepreneurship is emphasized by the interactive model propounded by Waldinger et al., The model shows how the effective interaction between entrepreneurs and clients can be one of the responsible factors behind the development of the ethnic business (Waldinger et al., 1990).

language is the primary tool of communication, and it is the career of culture, lack of language proficiency in ethnic entrepreneurs can intensify the challenges caused by cultural differences. Learning the local language broadens the business horizons of minority ethnic enterprises enabling them to understand cultural sensitivity and act appropriately according to the situations. In addition to that learning the local language also helps immigrant entrepreneurs' integration and inclusion into the host society. Many respondents admitted that they speak basic Finnish but not at the native level, they lack the adequate vocabulary and linguistic creativity that is required to explain the culinary significance of the cuisines they serve, which in turn prevents them from building effective interpersonal communication with their clients.

Another negative impact of the language barrier is seen in the use of local media and advertisement strategies adopted by the participants. The majority of the participants replied that due to their limited Finnish skills, they have not been able to use the local media adequately

to amplify their business profit. They face problems especially in dealing with media and creating advertisement content that suits and justifies their products and services.

During the interview, only one respondent reported that they use local radio to advertise their restaurant. Besides the language barrier, another significant factor that hindered them from using local media was the lack of adequate financial resources. They admitted that due to financial limitations, they are not able to utilize local media to advertise their business. Consequently, they rely primarily on word of mouth (WOM) as their sole marketing strategy. Limited budget and lack of local language proficiency were the two factors that obstructed ethnic Nepali restauranteur's use of local media and reliance on WOM. Advertising can be a crucial channel to promote the market of ethnic cuisines it can spread the information about the cuisines and reduce the uncertainty for the inexperienced non-ethnic customers (Jang and Kim, 2015).

The concept of word of mouth (WOM) was first introduced during the 1960s (Arndt, 1967). WOM refers to an informal communication between costumers about a specific brand, product, or service and which is thought to be more influential than advertisement itself because it can shape customers' behaviours and perception of the goods and service through its non-commercial approach and trustworthiness (Litvin et al., 2008). Word of mouth (WOM) and Interpersonal influence are taken as the effective source of information for the customer to purchase goods and services. Such sources of information are taken as reliable, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry (Litvin et al., 2008).

6. FINDINGS

1. Besides the economic advancement ethnic food businesses act as a reliable means to showcase cultural identity awareness for Ethnic Nepali restaurateurs in Finland.
2. Ethnic Nepali nomenclature and ethnic theme of the restaurant are the results of cultural nostalgia. They took such visual arrangement as a tool that helped them to construct their cultural identity, and group membership, and create a sense of belongingness.
3. Nepali ethnic restaurateurs have dual responsibilities first they need to address local customers' demands to survive in the local culinary market, second, they need to preserve the culinary identity that differentiates them from other ethnic enterprises. To cope with this duality; first, they fuse their cuisine according to the demand of the local market. Second, they use ethnic themes and nomenclature to reconstruct and promote their cultural identity.
4. Globalization has created significant challenges in maintaining the authenticity of ethnic cuisines. Ethnic fusion helps to localize the ethnic cuisines in the host settings but that impacts the authenticity which is one of the crucial characteristics of the ethnic culinary identity.
5. Cultural differences and language barriers pose significant challenges to the ethnic Nepali restaurateurs in Finland. It restricts them from communicating effectively with their clients and the local community as well as their use of the local media to advertise their business.

7. DISCUSSION

Ethnic entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary area of study that incorporates various entities. The present research aims to examine the nexus between globalization, a fusion of ethnic cuisines and its impact on ethnic authenticity and consequently its impact on the cultural identity construction of ethnic restaurateurs. The interview data suggested that there is a complex interplay between globalization, ethnic fusion, authenticity and cultural identity in the ethnic restaurant business. Hence, the present chapter discusses the theme of interview data and analyses their relevance to the present research by comparing it with the existing literature in the field.

Kim & Jang (2019) remarked that the proliferation of ethnic restaurants globally is the increasing demand for the global flavours of local consumers. The interview data revealed that the phenomenon of globalization has introduced adequate communicative opportunities however it has also produced significant challenges as well (Fantini, 2009, 456). The research participants seem to have taken maintaining and preserving their cultural identity through their enterprises as their moral responsibility. At the same time, they seemed concerned about their survival in the increasingly diverse and competitive Finnish culinary market. Hence, they implemented certain strategies to cope with these challenges in their work lives.

The phenomenon of globalization necessitates the fusion of ethnic cuisines to localize them in host settings. Though ethnic fusion facilitates cultural exchange and adaptation between the host and the source culture, it impacts the authenticity of ethnic cuisines. In the context of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland, ethnic fusion has both opportunities and challenges. The data reveal that while fusion cuisine addresses the preferences of local customers, it often raises concerns about diluting cultural authenticity.

Immigrants' involvement in small-scale enterprises and self-employment is relatively higher in European countries. Consequently, this phenomenon has received significant attention from scholars and stakeholders. According to Guerrero and Wanjiru (2021), the growing global human migration has emerged as a grand societal and humanitarian challenge worldwide. In the changing world scenario, ethnic entrepreneurship has emerged as a means of socio-cultural and economic integration of immigrants in the host society (Rath, J., & Swagerman, A., 2016).

The research data illustrated that ethnic Nepali restaurants play an important role in promoting Nepali cultural culture in Finland, so such establishments should not be looked at only as an economic venture and employment opportunity for the immigrant Nepali in Finland. Besides a means of financial substance, minority Nepali immigrant entrepreneurs viewed their ethnic enterprises as an opportunity to be connected with their cultural heritage, promote their culture, and construct their identity in the host society. Further, the rewards a sense of autonomy, and freedom are some of the important aspects of offered ethnic entrepreneurship that motivate immigrants toward ethnic entrepreneurship (Borooah and Hart, 1999).

As mentioned earlier, most of the existing literature on ethnic Nepali entrepreneurship undermines the theme related to identity construction, intercultural exchange and communication. Here I would like to relate an article by Liu-Ferrer and Dalima Tamang in the ethnic Nepali restaurant business contextually based in Japan. It highlights how the specific visa policies compel Nepali immigrants to join ethnic enterprises just to extend their visas. The article focuses on how such visa policies are indirectly responsible for the restricted socioeconomic mobility of immigrants, which confines them to the ethnic niche realm (Liu-Ferrer & Tamang, 2023). Though the fundamental orientation of this article does not match with the present study it presents the synopsis of the migratory trajectory promoted by ethnic Nepali culinary practices globally.

The article by Boch et al., (2021) explores the role of ethnic cuisine in the process of assimilation among immigrant communities in the United States. According to the authors, food practices serve as a crucial marker of cultural assimilation and integration into American society. They explore how along with the time ethnic foods evolve to become part of the mainstream culinary landscape and help shape cultural identities within immigrant communities.

In addition to that the article discusses how consumption of ethnic cuisine by non-immigrant Americans helps to grow cultural acceptance and cultural diversity in the United States.

One of the fundamental concerns of the present research has been the construction of cultural identity through ethnic enterprises. Joane Nagel (1994) examines how ethnic identities and cultures are actively constructed and reconstructed through social processes. For Nagel ethnicity is not a rigid and fixed entity rather it is a dynamic and fluid aspect of social identity that is influenced by numerous social-cultural, economic and political influences. This perspective is useful to examine the ethnic Nepali restaurateurs in Finland, whose involvement in the ethnic food business reflects their effort to reconstruct their ethnic and cultural identity in Finland (Joane Nagel, 1994).

Nagel's article presents a very useful insight into how cultural identity can be determined by social processes. Ethnic entrepreneurship refers to a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national backgrounds or migration experiences that work as an alternative socio-economic mobility strategy to achieve economic advancement in the host society (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990).

Haiming Liu and Lianlian Lin's (2009) article addresses a similar identity concern in ethnic Chinese restaurants in the USA. They examine how these restaurants in the USA help in the construction and expression of Chinese culinary identity and transnational culture in the USA. This article depicts Chinese immigrants' involvement in the ethnic restaurant business as a strategy to maintain the cultural connection to their ethnic roots as well as their cross-cultural adaptation in the USA. The conceptual framework of the article is very similar to the present research therefore it helps to explore the inherent intercultural dynamic between the host and the source culture. It illustrates how the interactions between local and global influences shape the culinary practices and identities of Chinese restaurateurs and their communities.

Robert Pütz (2002) explores the role of transculturality in the context of entrepreneurship. However, Pütz does not necessarily mention ethnic entrepreneurship, the emphasis on the cultural interaction and exchanges across diverse cultures and its influence on entrepreneurial activities helps to comprehend the role of culture in a business endeavour. Another relevant idea Pütz deals with within his article is the idea of a dynamic and fluid nature of the culture in entrepreneurship and how cultural diversity can be utilized to create innovative business

practices and opportunities. This idea discussed in the Pütz articles relates to the present study that focuses on the social construction of cultural identity via ethnic enterprises.

The majority of the existing literature on ethnic cuisines and ethnic entrepreneurship often relates them to transnational migrants in the host setting. Such phenomena create a significant theoretical loop between the notions of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. In the context of transnational migration ethnic foods are foods that are not native to the land in which it is eaten in other words ethnic cuisines are foods that have been transmitted to the host society from other countries and cultures (Kim & Jang, 2019) such transmission of ethnic cuisines not only limit itself to the culinary realms rather it helps in the intercultural communication and exchange between host and the source culture.

The negotiation of authenticity and construction of identity is a common challenge faced by ethnic entrepreneurs in the host society. The challenges in maintaining authenticity were considered to be one of the primary challenges of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland. Many of the participants acknowledged that they strive for the best to maintain the authenticity of their cuisine. However various factors restrict them from offering pure authentic Nepali cuisines to their customer. The interview data suggested that many respondents are aware that ethnic authenticity is a crucial identity marker for them, and they are identified and differentiated from other similar restaurants based on their ethnic identity.

Minority ethnic entrepreneurs can utilise their ethnic identity as a marketing strategy to promote their business (McKinsey Global Perspective, 2020). However, the interview data suggests that a lack of linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence challenges them to utilize their ethnic identity as a marketing strategy in their business. The intercultural communication scholar Hua Zhu signifies the importance of intercultural communication skills in a multicultural setting where people from diverse cultural backgrounds meet. According to her ICC helps to understand how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interact and deal with cultural and linguistic differences. Further, it is useful to examine the effects of such interactions on interpersonal and group relations, and individuals' identity construction (Hua, 2016).

Monica Heller (2003) discusses the influence of globalization and the new economic trends in the commodification of language and cultural identity in today's global era. The study

depicts that authenticity is discursively constructed by negotiation between the entrepreneur and the customer and can enhance customer satisfaction and contribute to the success of ethnic food businesses. Heller's stance on the commodification of culture reflects the ethnic Nepali entrepreneur's use of ethnic nomenclature and ethnic themes in their restaurants. Such strategies typify the commodification of culture and ethnicity through ethnic enterprises.

García-Cabrera et al., 2020) in their article 'Immigrants Entrepreneurial Motivation in Europe: Liabilities and Assets' briefly talk about the challenges faced by immigrants in integrating into the local job market. They highlight various factors that they categorize as macro, meso, and micro-level factors and analyze cultural differences and language barriers as one of the primary factors that compel immigrants to start enterprises. Though the focus of the article is entrepreneurship in general and does not deal with the enterprises that are concentrated on the ethnic niche created by the ethnicity of immigrants, the article is useful in examining the motivational paradigm behind immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe.

The language barrier is believed to be one of the principal reasons behind immigrants' concentration on the enterprises and self-employment created by their ethnic niche but the language barrier equally impacts the minority immigrant in their entrepreneurial endeavour which is often ignored in such studies. There are plenty of studies that deal with the concentration of immigrant entrepreneurs in ethnic niches created by their ethnicity. However, the existing academic research has seldom focused on the nexus between globalization, ethnic authenticity, culinary fusion and cultural identity in the context of Ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland.

Rath, J., & Swagerman, A. (2016) in their article 'Promoting ethnic entrepreneurship in European Cities: Sometimes Ambitious, Mostly Absent, Rarely Addressing Structural Features' highlight that ethnic entrepreneurship as a means of the socio-cultural and economic integration of Immigrants in the host society (Rath, J., & Swagerman, A., 2016). The study analyzes the effectiveness of diverse policies, strategies and schemes implemented by governmental and nongovernmental organizations in different European countries to promote self-entrepreneurship in general and ethnic minority immigrant self-entrepreneurship in specific. Though the study is based on a broader European framework which doesn't match the specific nature of the present study it helps to comprehend the nature of the challenges faced by minority immigrants in various European countries.

The research data indicated that cultural differences and language barriers pose significant challenges to the progress and financial growth of the ethnic Nepali establishment in Finland. The language barrier has created a substantial challenge for them to develop effective

intercultural communication with their clients. It has further restricted their use of local media consequently making them rely on word of mouth (WOM) as a primary means of advertisement. One of the important findings the research data revealed is that language barriers don't only affect the socio-economic integration of immigrants in host society rather they also cause significant challenges to the ethnic establishment run by immigrant Nepali people in Finland. The issue of language barriers in the context of immigrants and their ethnic enterprises is a highly debated topic. John W. Berry's masterpiece, "Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures" (2005) and Young Kim's Cross-Cultural Adaptation are the most important pieces of literature this research references to study how language barrier impacts the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants in the host culture (Berry, 2005, Kim, 2001) Berry and Kim's writing is relatable to examine the ethnic fusion as a strategy of cross-cultural adaptation in Finland.

Kim emphasizes that language proficiency is essential for successful integration into a host culture. The limited ability of respondents to communicate effectively in Finnish not only hinders effective customer service but also restricts the use of local media for marketing and advertisement purposes compelling them to rely heavily on word-of-mouth as the means of advertisement of their business.

8. LIMITATION, IMPLICATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As with any research, the present study has many limitations. First, the study has spatial and temporal limitations as it is contextually based in Finland and conducted at a specific point in time which limits the applicability of its findings to other contexts geographical conditions and other periods. Similarly, the relatively small sample size of the present research has reduced its generalizability. As the present study uses the semi-structured interview as a primary data collection although significant carefulness has been paid there is the possibility of the presence of human biases. The research topic is narrowed down to a specific topic that covers the interplay of ethnic fusion, authenticity and cultural identity construction paradigm and language barrier, however, given the broad and complex nature of ethnic entrepreneurship, there could be other various similar entities within ethnic entrepreneurship which present study does not cover.

This study emphasizes overcoming the language barrier and developing intercultural competence through formal informal training and fostering intercultural communication in the ethnic Nepali restaurant premises as a successful ethnic enterprise in Finland. Such endeavours could help to create effective intercultural communication, reduce cultural biases, and stereotypes, and promote mutual respect between the restaurateurs and the clients.

Such practice could help to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for both restaurants and their clients and assist in the integration of ethnic Nepali restaurateurs into Finnish society. Effective Intercultural communication and exchange between entrepreneurs and clients could help to extend the customer database resulting in market expansion and increased profitability.

Given the broad and complex nature of the study, and the limited research in the field there is significant research potential within the ethnic Nepali restaurant field in Finland. Future research could direct their focus on the specific types of training and communication strategies to enhance the business performance of ethnic Nepali restaurants in Finland which could be helpful to examine their economic sustainability in the Finnish context. Such endeavour could help in the identity construction of Nepali immigrants living in Finland.

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10. APPENDICES

Interview Questionnaire

1. Would you please introduce yourself including the source of motivation to choose a Nepali ethnic-themed restaurant as a profession?
2. How would you describe Finnish and Nepalese culinary culture?
3. Nepal and Finland differ significantly in terms of culinary Culture. Finnish people have different dietary requirements and culinary landscapes than those of Nepal. How easy it is to address such different customer requirements as being an ethnic restaurateur?
4. Authenticity of ethnic cuisine is a highly debated topic. What is your perception of Authentic Ethnic Nepali Cuisine? Do Nepalese ethnic restaurants in Finland represent authentic Nepali Cuisine?
5. Have you faced any obstacles in serving authentic Nepali cuisine due to unavailability of the authentic resources, ingredients, spices etc? How do you handle such situations?
6. In what ways does your restaurant have tailored and customized your cuisine and restaurant atmosphere to align with local consumer's preferences? Does such customization impact the authenticity of the cuisine you serve?
7. As culinary tradition is one of the important identity markers of any culture. How do you perceive the importance of ethnic Nepali restaurants in promoting cross-cultural exchange?

8. Cultural exchange is a continuous process. An ethnic restaurant is a hub where various cultures meet every day. How does the way you welcome and treat your customer differ from the other ethnic entrepreneurs in a similar field?
9. Ethnic cuisine is the cuisine that comes from the heritage and culture of specific ethnic groups for example in your context the food you serve is from Nepalese ethnic culinary landscapes. What are the most important aspects of Nepalese ethnic food and culinary tradition, the local consumer like the most?
10. Besides ethnic cuisine ethnic restaurants have many things ethnic for example, your layout, decoration, ambience, music, dishes, and crockeries used in preparing and presentation of food everything is unique in your restaurant. How do you think these arrangements help you in exploring Nepalese native culinary traditions?
11. Ethnicity-based restaurants are cultural ambassadors they bridge two cultures and create social interactions and cultural exchange between the people of two. Do you agree with this statement? How does your ethnic restaurant do this could you explain a little bit?
12. It is believed that immigrants chose ethnic restaurants due to the necessity factors because it is often difficult for them to integrate into the local labour market because of cultural and linguistic barriers. But we should not forget the opportunity factors, for example, Nepalese immigrants chose the ethnic restaurant business because there is better financial growth, and it provides them the opportunity to promote their cultural heritage. What is your opinion about these two arguments? Which options better fit you?
13. We often hear that sincere hospitality “Atithi Devo Bhava” toward their guest is the heart of Nepalese culture does it apply to the home only, or does it apply to the business also? How do your guests respond to the way you show them hospitality?
14. Cultural differences and linguistic complications sometimes create challenges in workplaces. Have you ever experienced any uncomfortable situation with local customers due to cultural differences between you? How did it start? How did you solve it? Did anyone help to solve it? Do you have prepared any strategies to deal with the problem that arises due to linguistic/cultural issues in workplaces?
15. Advertisement and marketing are lifelines to modern business. We have seen that social media are becoming incredibly good and easily accessible platforms in the

promotion of small-scale businesses. What strategies and platforms are you using to advertise your business?

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Department of Language and Communication Studies

Master in Language Globalization and Intercultural Communication (LAGIC)

Researcher: Hari Pathak



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Research Topic

“Exploring the Nexus of Globalization, Identity Awareness and authenticity of ethnic cuisines in Ethnic Nepali Restaurants in Finland.

Researcher: Hari Pathak

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and that I can pause or stop taking part in the study at any time without giving a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for me. The research materials collected about me up to the point of pausing or stopping may still be used in the study.

Yes No

By giving my consent, I accept that data and materials will be collected from me as described in the information sheet.

Yes No

I have read and understood the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

Yes No

I consent to have my voice recorded for research purposes, but my voice has been processed in such a way that I cannot be identified.

Yes No

I confirm that I have received the information sheet about the content of the study, how it will be conducted and what it means on my part, as well as the privacy notice. I have also had the opportunity to ask the researchers further questions. I have therefore been adequately informed about the content of the survey, how it will be conducted and what it means for me, as well as about the processing of my data which are processed based on public interest as set out in the law.

I have had sufficient time to consider my participation in the study. I have not been pressured or tempted to take part in the research.

I have considered the above points and have decided that I want to participate in the study / those sections where I have ticked "yes".

Yes No

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Participant's Signature