

## **ORGANIZATIONAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ETHNIC RESTAURANTS' FUNCTIONS**

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With the rise of the globalization in recent years, nowadays people have more ability to discover the cultures of different regions all over the world. Therefore, businesses need to differentiate their traditional services and products along with the changes of the social and cultures, the increasing of consumer demand for new and distinct experiences in order to catch the trends without being left behind.

People in modern life tend to improve their life quality and this is one of the reasons for the growth of eating out phenomenon. People visit restaurants not only to eat but to enjoy their leisure time with good food, quality services and comfortable atmosphere. By thematic focus restaurants are classified into two groups: classic and conceptual. Conceptual restaurants can also be divided into special thematic and ethnic (restaurants of national cuisine) [1].

Along with the growth of the restaurant industry, we also witness an increase in the number of ethnic restaurants. Ethnic cuisines represent the varied nationalities, traditions, and food cultures of different regions in the world. Ethnic restaurants offer local citizens and tourists the ability to get acquainted and explore the cuisine of different countries.

The following are some of the main characteristics of ethnic restaurants:

- The menu is based on strict adherence to a specific ethnic cuisine of a region.
- The ethnic style of interior and exterior décor for a specific type of cuisine – it is essential to create an atmosphere that reflects the ethnicity of the food that is served in the restaurant.
- The reflection of particular national traditions in the name of the restaurant, its design, menu format, music playlist and other details, which considerably promotes customer perception of the restaurant and also an effective way to attract people.
- Details in customer service that reflect the ethnic traditions, for example: using chopsticks in Asian restaurants, using national dishes or dishes with traditional design, staff clothes with specific details, etc.

According to the statistic on website TripAdvisor, at this moment there are 1589 establishments of different types (excluding delivery only) and cuisines in restaurant business in Odessa, however it is not the actual number. Because of the pandemic COVID-19 and Russian's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a number of

establishments had to permanently or temporarily closed but their profiles on TripAdvisor are still being kept. A huge part of 1589 establishments, from which 1470 are listed under category “restaurants” are mixed cuisine, only a small part can be classified as ethnic restaurants with all needed characteristics.

The fact is due to the difficult situation in Ukraine in recent years restaurateurs tend to promote restaurants with mixed cuisine instead of focusing on a specific national cuisine. The most common examples are Asian food restaurants.

Rather than having only Japanese or Chinese food, nowadays famous food from different national cuisines can be found in a number of Asian restaurants in Ukraine, and Odessa is not an exception. Vietnamese iconic “Pho Bo” and Chinese “Bao” are included in the menu of Navi Sushi – a Japanese-food restaurant chain and several different Japanese restaurants and sushi bars after these dishes gained popularity among Ukrainian. Another example, in the beginning Chin Chin – a famous Asian restaurant chain that belonged to G-Group, which is one of the largest Food and Beverage companies in Odessa, was focused on Chinese cuisine, however, by time Vietnamese, Thai and Japanese food were also added to their menu.

In Odessa and also in Ukraine in general ethnic cuisine from European countries and America seems to gain more popularity, Asian cuisine got more attentions from the locals in recent years, however, the number of restaurants with the ethnic cuisine of only one nation is very few.

Beside the fact that most of Asian restaurants in Ukraine are mixed cuisine, rather than offering only traditional food, fusion cuisine dishes also take some positions in the menu, and in several places, it is not only a few. One of the reasons that lead to this fact is many locals are not familiar with Asian food. Therefore, in order to expand the target market, numerous restaurants expand and vary their menu with fusion dishes that were created as results from the combination of elements from different European and Asian cuisines.

Overall, in Ukraine and also in Odessa in particular, European and American cuisine seem to be preferred over Asian cuisine due to the more common in culture and food. Moreover, because of the difficult situation in Ukraine at the moment, increasing Asian traditional food and ethnic restaurants popularity is challenging. Beside what were mentioned above, one of the reasons is the growth in ingredients cost.

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