

2023

Independent Restaurant Owners' Strategies for Acquiring, Managing, and Retaining Organizational Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Alice Nelson Sidibe
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations Commons](#), and the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Alice E. Nelson-Sidibe

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Erica Gamble, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Theresa Neal, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Independent Restaurant Owners' Strategies for Acquiring, Managing, and Retaining
Organizational Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

by

Alice E. Nelson-Sidibe

MS, Walden University, 2012

MBA, American Intercontinental University, 2009

B.S., American Intercontinental University, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

Independent restaurant owners face challenges of slim profit margins and postpandemic labor shortages without the benefit of additional support their franchised counterparts receive. Independent restaurant owners are concerned about these external pressures making them more vulnerable to closure during economic downturns. Previous researchers have not explored how to use organizational knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to achieve success within an independent restaurant. Grounded in resource-based view theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that independent restaurant owners use to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and sustain their business beyond five years. The participants were three independent restaurant owners operating their restaurants for more than five years. Data were collected using semi structured interviews, observations, and archival record review. Five themes emerged from thematic analysis: use the owner's prior success, set clear expectations, build upon employee competencies, know the needed KSAs for success, and know the required personality/attitude for the culture. Key recommendations for business owners include networking and building KSAs that help mitigate external pressures; knowing, leveraging, and retaining employee expertise; establishing and maintaining a knowledge-sharing culture; documenting organizational knowledge to mitigate the risk of loss; and knowing and seeking complementary and missing KSAs and personality traits when filling open positions. The implications for positive social change include the potential to reduce poverty by employing and retaining local community members and reducing food waste through more effective knowledge-sharing that manages resource consumption.

Independent Restaurant Owners' Strategies for Acquiring, Managing, and Retaining
Organizational Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

by

Alice E. Nelson-Sidibe

MS, Walden University, 2012

MBA, American Intercontinental University, 2009

B.S., American Intercontinental University, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2023

Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral study to my husband, Djiguiba, who believed in and encouraged me throughout this journey. To my mother, Virginia, who dedicated her life to ensuring her children had opportunities that she did not. To my father, Carl, may God rest his soul, who always shared the importance of education and demonstrated it throughout his naval career. To my sisters, Charlene, Carlotta, Carla, and Cardella, who have all left their imprint on my life. Finally, to my children, Moussa, Aboubacar, Yaya, Oumar, and Iesha, I hope that witnessing my journey will inspire you on your own journeys through life.

Acknowledgments

Praise be to my Lord and Savior who blesses me, keeps me, and is always gracious to me. I would like to thank my academic committee, beginning with Dr. Erica Gamble, who has guided me and taught me with her feedback and insights on what it means to be a practical scholar. Dr. Theresa Neal asked questions that drove clarity and coherence in my final study. To my leaders, colleagues, and friends at Comcast who have been supportive during my scholarly pursuits.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem and Purpose	3
Population and Sampling	3
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	4
Interview Questions	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	6
Assumptions.....	7
Limitations	7
Delimitations.....	7
Significance of the Study	8
Contribution to Business Practice.....	8
Implications for Social Change.....	8
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	9
Development of Resource Based View Theories	10
Strategic Deployment of Resources.....	11
People as Valuable Resources	13
Evolution of Resources Based Theories	14

Filling Gaps in Resource Based Theories	16
Restaurant Industry Classification and Evaluation	23
Operational Environment of Independent Restaurants	38
Fundamental Challenges Facing IROs.....	50
Transition	60
Section 2: The Project.....	61
Purpose Statement.....	61
Role of the Researcher	61
Participants.....	63
Research Method and Design	65
Research Method	65
Research Design.....	67
Population and Sampling	70
Ethical Research.....	74
Data Collection Instruments	76
Data Collection Technique	80
Data Organization Technique	83
Data Analysis	84
Reliability and Validity.....	87
Reliability.....	87
Validity	88
Transition and Summary.....	89

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	90
Introduction.....	90
Presentation of the Findings.....	90
Theme 1: Use the Owner’s Prior Successful Business Experience	93
Second-Order Theme: Owner Commitment.....	96
Theme 2: Set Clear Expectations for Consistent Performance and Outcomes	98
Second-Order Theme: Manage Talent.....	100
Theme 3: Build Upon Employee Competencies.....	103
Second-Order Theme: Manage Talent.....	107
Theme Four: Know the Needed KSAs for Success	108
Theme 5: Know the Needed Personality/Attitudes for Culture	112
Implications of Consumer Sentiment.....	116
Applications to Professional Practice	120
Implications for Social Change.....	122
Recommendations for Action	123
Recommendations for Further Research.....	124
Reflections	125
Conclusion	125
References.....	127
Appendix A: Participation Request Email.....	179
Appendix B: Referring Participant Confidentiality Informant	180
Appendix C: Interview Protocol.....	181

Appendix D: Observation Protocol Guide..... 183

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Descriptions.....	<u>91</u>
Table 2. Frequency of First-and Second Order Conceptual Themes.....	<u>93</u>
Table 3. Yelp Ratings, Reviewers, and Comments by Participant	<u>116</u>
Table 4. Yelp Review Sentiment Descriptions	<u>117</u>
Table 5. Yelp Review Sentiments by Category	<u>118</u>

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small businesses accounted for between 91% to 95% of private companies and employed 36.8% to 59.4% of all employees across the 14 congressional districts in Pennsylvania (U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, 2020a). According to the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy (2020b), small business openings exceeded small business closures from 2010 to 2019. Small businesses' survival depends on small business owners' (SBOs) ability to manage human capital and its associated knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). Some of the unique characteristic of small businesses include owners who remain closer to daily operations and consumers and a lack of resources, often due to the owner's lack of experience and knowledge during start-up; as a result, they likely learned on the job through trial and error (Eggers, 2020; Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; Zahra, 2021). This unique operational model made small businesses vulnerable to crises (Song et al., 2021), and their failure led to lost jobs and impoverished communities. Because the small independent restaurant industry lacks barriers to entry, this industry epitomized this phenomenon.

Background of the Problem

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic, which led to the United States declaring a public health emergency and restricting gatherings of people in public spaces (Sohrabi et al., 2020). The restrictions led to a decline in businesses that rely on in-person consumer visits and an increase in online interactions (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). The small businesses that

suffered the most because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were those in the leisure and hospitality services, including the accommodation and restaurant sectors. In May 2019, restaurants and drinking places accounted for 64% of the hospitality industry (Wilmoth, 2020). By May 2020, restaurants and drinking places accounted for only 27%, less than half of the previous year's places of employment (Wilmoth, 2020). The significant decline in employment opportunities also signaled the closure of small independent restaurants. Independent restaurant owners (IROs) faced additional challenges with fewer resources and operating with smaller margins (Alberca & Parte, 2018; Blose et al., 2019). These challenges made IROs more vulnerable to closures during economic downturns like the one incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although many IROs needed ways to compete during the economic downturn, Brizek et al. (2021) found that some owners embraced new ways of operating. Some examples included opening food trucks, closing some locations, focusing more on catering and take-out, reimagining the business, and finding other ways to remain competitive. These examples stemmed from having sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) inherent in the industry. KSAs are attributed to the level of competency an individual has from prior education and work experience (Sajjadi et al., 2019). IROs had their KSAs, but owners may have increased organizational knowledge by identifying others with the needed KSAs, hiring them, and actively managing and retaining them.

Problem and Purpose

The specific business problem was that some IROs lacked strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain businesses beyond 5 years. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the strategies that IROs used to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and sustain the businesses beyond 5 years.

Population and Sampling

Three purposively sampled IROs in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States participated in the data collection. The data capture techniques included semistructured interviews, observations, and customer reviews. The multilayered approach to data collection captured the first-hand experiences of IROs and related activities in their business.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative method for this study after equally considering qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods. Researchers use qualitative inquiry to observe and inquire about the study participants' shared experiences and identify commonalities (Toye et al., 2016). Quantitative investigation requires separation and distance from the participants to gather and examine objective data for explaining comparisons, causes, and descriptions of a phenomenon with limited bias (Mishra & Subudhi, 2019). Researchers use the mixed method to account for any limitations in qualitative or quantitative designs, but more often, the mixed-method techniques require a team of researchers who are managed concurrently (Kankam, 2020). Therefore, neither quantitative nor mixed-methods research methods were appropriate for this study. The qualitative method was

suitable for addressing the proposed study's purpose to explore successful IROs KSA acquisition, administration, and conservation strategies.

Within the qualitative approach, there are multiple research designs available to study phenomena. The three research designs reviewed included organizational ethnography, focus groups, and case studies. Organizational ethnography provides collaboration between the researcher and the participants to better understand social practices and processes (Ciuk et al., 2018); however, it does require a closer relationship with participants, which could increase bias. In another approach, researchers use focus groups to gather rich data, identify inconsistencies, and share the participants' collective experiences (Gill & Ballie, 2018). Collective experiences involve sharing information during the data-gathering process. Those collective experiences may change participants' initial opinions or viewpoints, leading to researchers lacking the means to gather data and objectively understand the individual experiences. Alternately, employing a multiple-case study allows researchers to gain additional insights into the phenomenon by comparing or contrasting findings to increase the study's validity. Using a multiple-case study enabled result comparisons to strengthen the findings' validity while using the same approach with different organizations (Yin, 2018). A multiple-case study was appropriate to address and compare the experiences of various IROs. The study's validity increased through dealing with information from multiple case units.

Research Question

What strategies did IROs use to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
2. How did you measure the success of the strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years?
3. What strategies did you find that worked best to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years successfully?
4. What were the key challenges to implementing the strategies to successfully acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years?
5. How did you address the key challenges to implementing strategies to successfully acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years?
6. What additional information can you share about your strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the resource-based view (RBV) theory developed by Wernerfelt (1984), revised by Barney et al. (2011), and stemmed from Penrose's (1960) growth theory. RBV theory addresses internal resources to enable firm growth and achieve competitive advantage (Wernerfelt, 1984). According to RBV theory, firms maintain a competitive edge when resources are unique (Barney & Clark,

2007), and the firm's leaders know how to retain, divest, and exploit resources (Wernerfelt, 1995). Achieving and sustaining competitive advantage requires more than just having resources. A firm's owner and leaders must also plan how best to manage resources (Burvill et al., 2018). Mupani and Chipunza (2019) proposed that RBV has become one of the most salient theories in human resource management literature. KSA management's resource-based view bridges the gap between organizational strategy and human resources (Wright et al., 2001), thus enabling leaders to use some of the most critical firm resources, human and intellectual capital, to achieve a competitive advantage. Applying RBV theory as the lens to observe, listen, and synthesize IRO's successful strategies for managing KSAs allowed me to identify, explore, and comprehend how those strategies contributed to sustaining the businesses beyond 5 years.

Operational Definitions

Electronic word of mouth: Electronic word of mouth is a casual description of consumer perceptions of their experiences shared via online platforms used by other consumers to make buying decisions (Jalilvand et al., 2017; Litvin et al., 2018).

Independent restaurant: An independent restaurant is not part of a chain or franchise (Parsa et al., 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The researcher-dependent nature of qualitative inquiry allows for the uncovering of participants' perceptions and experiences, leading to the collection of meaningful data (McGrath et al., 2019). The personal nature of the data collection, however, requires a reckoning and mitigation strategy of any assumptions on the part of the researcher,

limitations in the research design, and so the investigation is sufficiently bound in a way that makes the topic clear.

Assumptions

Assumptions in research provide insight into the researcher's worldview, potential biases, and data collection challenges (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The primary premise of this study was that participants would answer interview questions honestly and thoroughly. Another assumption was that the participants had sufficient knowledge to answer the interview questions and would have adequate time to provide detailed responses. A final assumption was that participants would be willing to share secondary data that supports the interview data.

Limitations

A study's limitations are identified as potential weaknesses in the research design that may affect outcomes (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). The study's primary limitations that may affect results included participants' willingness to be honest and detailed in their responses, their knowledge regarding the topic, and the time commitment to the interview, leading to insufficient responses. Finally, the availability and willingness of the participant to provide secondary data could have confirmed or weakened the study's results.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the research's boundaries or scope as set by the researcher (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). This study's scope was limited to independently owned restaurants within the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Specifically, the sample

population included owners of independent restaurants that have remained in business for more than 5 years. Owners not in business beyond 5 years were excluded because they may not have demonstrated successful strategies to stay in business.

Significance of the Study

Outcomes from this study addressed identifying effective strategies for acquiring, managing, and retaining KSAs to sustain a business beyond 5 years. IROs may use these strategies to identify opportunities to recover from the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With more effective strategies, owners may gain or maintain a favorable competitive position.

Contribution to Business Practice

Because of the restaurant industry's economic distress as caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, struggling IROs may benefit from implementing strategies to revitalize their postpandemic business model. IRO's limited financial and human resources may benefit from applying the KSAs of their employees towards increased productivity and operational efficiency. Both productivity and operational efficiency positively influence business performance, improving competitive positions.

Implications for Social Change

Small business owners influence their community by providing jobs, products, services, and meeting places. IROs' influence offers an opportunity for positive social change by promoting informal yet positive social practices, such as CSR within the community (Morsing & Spence, 2019). IROs surviving beyond 5 years could continue

providing their communities with jobs, funding for charities, and demonstrate other socially responsible community-based business practices.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This qualitative multiple-case study explored IROs' strategies to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and ultimately sustain the businesses beyond 5 years. IROs face more significant challenges than their larger competitors because of lower entry barriers, resource constraints (Chou et al., 2020), and the number of restaurants within the same geographic area (Matti, 2020; Mhlanga, 2018a). Researchers have noted numerous ways IROs can succeed (C. Lee et al., 2016, 2019; Mhlanga, 2018b; Najib et al., 2020). However, additional research is needed on using organizational KSAs as a lever to achieve success. This study explored how organizational KSAs provide another resource for IRO survival.

The reviewed literature included influential resource-based theories, restaurant classifications and evaluation methods, operational characteristics, and challenges facing IROs that organizational KSAs influence. To identify relevant literature, I used Google Scholar and the Walden Library, through which I accessed Business Source Complete, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, and Emerald Insight databases. Additionally, I used peer-reviewed journals and governmental reports to increase the relevancy of the literature review. The keywords and phrases used for the search included: *resource-based view, resource-based theory, knowledge-based view, human capital theory, independent restaurant, family-owned, KSA, small business restaurant, competitive advantage, food service, knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, capabilities, small business, and SME.*

The literature review includes 197 sources, with 90% from peer-reviewed journals and 257 citations, and 86% published from 2018 to 2022 within 5 years from the expected study completion.

Development of Resource Based View Theories

The RBV theories have changed since the 20th century. As such, Penrose's (1960) and Wernerfelt's (1984) seminal works are foundational to contemporary researchers' use in developing RBV theories. Scholars and researchers use RBV to establish strategies focusing on a firm's resources (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984, 1995). As the RBV theories have developed, the interpretation of a resource has also changed. An example from literature is the development that considers viewing a person as a resource equivalent to tangible resources (Penrose, 1960). Authors like Penrose suggested using intellectual resources to get the most out of tangible resources. Such insights laid the foundation for modern resource-based theories.

The important decision-makers in any business are usually the owners, managers, and executives. These key stakeholders' decisions may determine a business' survival or failure. In 1960, Penrose tested the use of intellectual capital as a resource in the Hercules Powder Company case study. In the case study, Penrose surmised that a firm's management teams' practical and flexible use of resources were the only limitations that affected growth (1960). Although the theory focused on management's intellectual resources and omitted team members' intellectual capital, it also highlighted the importance of people as a viable resource to achieve business growth (1960).

Rather than solely focusing on resource utilization, the literature also included insights into the benefits of having limited resources. Wernerfelt (1984) discussed how to leverage resources considering Porter's (1980) five forces theory, suggesting that a firm's rare resources in the marketplace can lead to a competitive advantage and an additional barrier to entry for other organizations. Wernerfelt's insights demonstrated how a firm's resources, those beyond products and services, are beneficial when not easily duplicable. Their initial insights led to other theorists expanding further on the positive influence of non-traditional resources in business.

Outperforming the competition is the most positive impact that any theory or strategic use of resources can have. Barney (1991) further expanded the resource-based view to the resource-based approach. Barney also pinpointed characteristics organizations use to identify resources are more likely to lead to competitive advantage. Barney and Clark (2007, p. 70) termed a competitively useful resource valuable, rare, imitable, and exploitable by the organization (VRIO). Barney's (1991) evolved theory emphasized identifying and employing strategies that lead to a competitive advantage; VRIO is representative of practical tenets. The evolved and collective insights of RBV theorists can benefit key decision-makers when developing resources for differentiation in the market.

Strategic Deployment of Resources

The choice and application of resources can positively or negatively affect the organization's competitive position and growth. Effective deployment of resources includes the practical and deliberate application of all organizational resources for growth

and survival, both tangible and intangible (Zahra, 2021). RBV theorists promoted the practical application of resources through acquiring the appropriate number and level of resources, through the internal development of resources, by purchasing resources using mergers and acquisitions, and via the effective and efficient management of existing resources (Wernerfelt, 1995). Identifying and working with organizationally controlled resources lays the foundation for value creation and competitive positioning strategies.

Timing and uniqueness also affect how impactful a resource may be to an organization's competitive position. The most impactful resources provide attractive products or services to consumers and are not easily imitated by competitors (Maijanen, 2020). A lack of available resources in the marketplace gives the owner of a rare or valuable resource an exploitive market opportunity, placing them in a superior competitive position. An exploitive competitive situation often occurs when an organization is the first to move with a product or service (Porter, 1980). A first-mover position may not always benefit a company if it lacks the resources to develop a new product or service. Without first-mover status and limited resources, organizations may find collaboration and integration within social networks that include competitors beneficial for continued survival (Crick et al., 2023). When the economy no longer supports an organization's market dominance, however, the organization's decision-makers must seek different competitive methods. This strategy development approach emphasizes how external forces compel business owners to think differently about gaining and retaining resources to remain competitive.

People as Valuable Resources

An emphasis on people as valuable resources is reoccurring in resource-based literature regarding business performance. In 2001, Barney's conceptual framework of the resource-based theory made the theoretical ideas of the resource-based view more actionable and galvanized people as a competitive resource (Wright et al., 2001). According to Barney (1991), firms with a strategic focus on intangible assets outperform those focusing on tangible assets. Barney grouped tangible and intangible assets as resources that work together into physical, human, and organizational capital categories. Like Penrose (1960), Barney asserted that managerial resources are the most valuable because of their inimitability. However, when appropriately leveraged, a company's physical, organizational, and human resources can provide greater benefits. When managerial resources apply their unique KSAs, one company can achieve an advantage over another.

High turnover or attrition among managers can erode a company's competitive advantage if relied upon too heavily as a single resource point. Barney's (2001) evaluation of resource-based theories highlighted the importance of creating an enduring competitive advantage. One enduring competitive advantage is a firm's economic value based on consumers' continued business patronage (Barney & Clark, 2007). Continued patronage relies on management and the workers who create and deliver the product or service to consumers. Further, a business's survival depends on intangible resources like KSAs working with tangible resources. Berraies et al. (2021) found that environments where leaders distribute authority see greater trust, which increases knowledge

continuity. The more competent organization members become, the better the organization adjusts to economic uncertainty and other external forces.

Evolution of Resources Based Theories

Since its inception, many aspects of resource-based theories have evolved, including intangible and tangible resources such as finance, social welfare, technology, and data (Burvill et al., 2018; Isson & Harriott, 2016; Lv et al., 2019; Rodriguez-Lopez et al., 2020). Penrose's (1960) and Wernerfelt's (1984, 1995) earlier resource-based theories implied the importance of intangible resources but did not explicitly explain which resources. The different resources, though finite, are expansive within the scope and reach of a business. The expansiveness of resources within a company allows researchers to continue uncovering positive ways resources that affect a business's competitive advantage and ultimate survival. Explicitly describing resources like the VRIO theory presented by Barney (2001) and explaining how the resource affects the organization adds to the body of resource-based research. The precise identification of how to evaluate a resource that positively contributes to business survival or superior position improves the applicability of the theory to solving business problems. Academic investigators use theoretical foundations and reevaluate them based on current economic, social, and other world conditions, making the theory more practical for solving business challenges through tangible or intangible means to achieve a competitive advantage. Business leaders can benefit from understanding how to maximize tangible and intangible standards for survivability.

External forces like the economy influence business owners' and leaders' organizational strategies. Alvarez et al. (2020) revisited firm ownership in the 21st century to note the importance of intangible resources as “stakeholders beyond shareholders” influencing firm ownership through ongoing efforts. The revisited theory exemplifies how economic shifts change perceptions of the resources that meet the conditions of VRIO. Another example was the shift to Industry 4.0, which emphasized intellectual capital that enabled unique and inimitable resources, leading to a knowledge-based economy (Sagiyeva et al., 2018). The knowledge-based economy focuses on efficient management with the decline of tangible resources and increasingly emphasizes resources like data, rapid learning, change, and knowledge (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). As a result, competitive strategies emphasize intangible knowledge-based resources (Nagano, 2020) given the shift in market norms.

When the economy no longer supports an organization's favorable competitive position, the organization must modify strategies for sustainability. Just like economic changes affect the strategy used for an excellent competitive position, economic changes also force changes in theories (Alvarez et al., 2020). Researchers use theoretical and conceptual frameworks to examine and explore economic changes affecting business performance. As researchers apply theories to business problems, the approach evolves and could close existing research gaps. Simply, the expansiveness of resources within a business creates an opportunity for new researchers to continue uncovering positive ways resources affect a business's competitive advantage and ultimate survival.

Filling Gaps in Resource Based Theories

Additional research is needed regarding resource-based theories in a knowledge economy. Specifically, researchers exploring resource-based approaches in a knowledge economy identify additional organizational attributes that use resources to achieve a competitive advantage. In an updated perspective of resource-based theories, Barney et al. (2011) promoted the resource-based theory as the most prominent theory to describe, explain, and predict organizational relationships. As researchers tested the hypothesis and found positive and negative results, they found gaps that needed further exploration. Further testing of the theory led to other studies highlighting the importance of how an organization manages its resources, referred to as organizational capabilities (Carraresi et al., 2016; Chatzoglou et al., 2018; Dossena et al., 2020; Grant, 1991). Expanding on how managing resources creates opportunity, other researchers explored organizational capacity, or the steps owners and leaders take to improve a competitive position (Liu, 2016; Mustapa & Malak, 2017). Understanding how to position and invest in resources can help establish a strategy for the business's survival.

Business survivability in a knowledge-based economy may depend on the organizational capacity to leverage knowledge-based workers. Organizational capabilities and the ability to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage are possible through individuals applying their KSAs and attitudes to develop internal organizational strengths (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019; Salman et al., 2020). An organization that utilizes the collective KSA resources of competent individuals has a better chance of gaining a competitive advantage (Cho et al., 2021; Jogaratnam., 2017a). This strategy requires effective talent

management practices to identify people with needed KSAs and place them in the right roles to positively affect business performance.

Research involving KSAs for knowledge-based workers has expanded to address resource challenges in a knowledge-based economy. In response to organizations acquiring a competitive advantage through knowledge, the research community developed and tested resource-based theories to capture the needed KSAs through hiring, staff development, and strategic alliances (Ferreira et al., 2018). Because earlier resource-based theorists like Wernerfelt (1984, 1995) and Barney (1991) focused on people as valuable resources that drive a firm's growth and the economy, Grant (1996) and other researchers developed theories that offer actionable ways organizations can leverage people resources for the most competitive impact. People remain a focal point in developing resource-based approaches in the former and latter cases. As the economy, technology, and scientific understanding change, the opportunity persists for researchers to identify other resources that lead to a competitive advantage.

Supporters and challengers of resource-based theories require clear definitions for varying types of resources. These researchers filled theoretical and conceptual gaps, leading to more targeted theories and conceptual frameworks than general resource-based views. For example, Hart (1995) identified the need for more consideration of how the natural environment creates a competitive advantage because of its unique attributes, the evolving worldview on the finite resources available, the emphasis on global warming, and the need for renewable energy. The care and realization of the social impact of

managing resources demonstrated the broader usage of RBV that previous seminal researchers rarely considered.

Resource-based theories benefit from overlapping components. Even though Barney (2001) provided a conceptual framework for resource-based theories, the knowledge-based view (KBV) theoretical perspective regarding RBV needed a single framework for practical use (Grant, 1991). Although an advocate for RBV as a theory, Wernerfelt (1984) disagreed with Grant's iteration, instead recognizing RBV theory as a predictor or tool to determine how an organization obtains and leverages resources as a competitive advantage. This assertion by Wernerfelt reinforced the usefulness of RBV in solving a wide variety of business problems that limit a firm's competitive advantage. Although Wernerfelt and Barney refined RBV foundationally, researchers such as Grant, Hart (1995), and Becker (1962, 2002) contributed unique aspects to RBV and how organizations may benefit from leveraging resources. IROs may also benefit from understanding the diverse components.

KBV is one example of a theory that focuses on a specific resource, although it has limitations as a lone source framework. KBV theorists promote a firm's attainment, transfer, and retainment of knowledge as a cornerstone to successful strategic positioning (Prompreing & Hu, 2021). Human capital theory (HCT) is an example of a complementary framework that can improve KBV perspectives when considering strategic tools. HCT theory reinforces the importance of managing and investing in people resources for positive firm performance (Simic et al., 2020). The HCT theory includes practical guidance on how investments in human resources create a valuable

resource and lead to a return on investment for the business. KBV and HCT theories offer insights into how an organization's leaders share knowledge and invest in people with an overall goal of performance improvement. These complementary theories may help contextualize how IRO's KSAs contribute to restaurants' competitiveness and survivability.

Resource-Based Theory and the Value of Knowledge

The research community develops new theories by studying specific elements of the existing theory's relationship with recent phenomena. For example, RBV's foundational theory was Penrose's (1960) theory of the firm, which provided an in-depth look at how firms create wealth through their internal and external resources (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Further exploration of Penrose's theory identified that a firm's essential resource resides in employee knowledge and consumer opinion (Penrose, 1960). When studying the specific element of knowledge, employee knowledge is necessary but useless if managers fail to use it to benefit the organization. Ballesteros-Rodríguez et al. (2020) shared that understanding requires both a teacher's desire to teach and the student's learning. For an organization to benefit from the knowledge, management, and employees must have a reciprocal relationship that allows for exchanging ideas and information (Ogunmokun et al., 2020). Leaders must also know what to share with employees to increase the firm's intellectual capital. As the economy moves from product-based to knowledge-based, foundational RBV researchers will continue to define further RBV uses given ever-evolving contexts.

While context matters, understanding resources for each context may be more critical. In the firm's KBV, Grant (1996) enhanced RBV by demonstrating how knowledge benefits organizations. A central tenet of KBV theory is that knowledge shows itself in organizational learning, technology management, and managerial cognition (Grant, 1996). The theory's benefits include the continuation and focus on knowledge as a unique resource, the definition of the types of knowledge in a firm, and the contribution to a firm's competitive advantage. The defined types of expertise are tacit and explicit, and both require active use and coordination to contribute to a firm's competitive advantage (Prompreing & Hu, 2021). In the KBV theory, effective coordination of knowledge remains at the core of a manager's ability to ensure the transference of explicit and tacit knowledge (Lamont et al., 2019). As Penrose (1960), Wernerfelt (1984), and Barney (1991) identified in their research, controlling a resource is only the first step to competitive advantage. Organizations must apply those resources to their best advantage to create and maintain a competitive edge.

How well an organization utilizes resources may determine its survivability. An organization may become more competitive through knowledge. One way to exploit knowledge resources is by hiring and retaining people who can apply and manage innovation (Cho et al., 2020; Ode & Ayavoo, 2020). Making the most of innovation and other performance-enriching activities requires effectively allocating resources throughout the organization (Carraresi et al., 2016; Chatzoglou et al., 2018). While innovation requires knowledgeable people, innovation only occurs when an organization effectively uses internal capabilities to minimize external threats and seize opportunities.

Small businesses typically operate with limited resources, and a knowledge-based view may be out of the reach of some owners. Leveraging multiple resources allows small business owners to identify the best resource type for a competitive advantage. While knowledge presents a beneficial resource for an organization, harnessing those benefits requires related and supportive capital resources (Ahmad et al., 2020). Exploring how IROs might leverage all organizational KSAs requires a broad lens encompassing all small business resources. Where KBV theory lacks a comprehensive view, there remain theories that account for the human element in its totality.

Resource-Based Theory and the Value of Human Capital

HCT researchers focus on how businesses flourish or decline through investments in their employees. The approach aligns with Penrose's (1960) insights on maximizing all resources for firm growth, and Barney's (2001) focus on intellectual capital as a unique resource that affects firm survival. Becker (1962) connected an organization's productivity and profits to its investment in employees' specific KSAs, health, and well-being. The theory emphasized the importance of education either through college degrees and on-the-job or off-the-job training. Years of applying the theory in research uncovered an increase in organizations and countries seeking improved performance through investments in higher education for their citizens (Becker, 2002). The connection between an organization's growth or lack of development can incentivize business leaders to invest further in their employees.

An organization's connection between human capital investments and performance may help a business prioritize on-the-job training. Das (2021) and Skiba et

al. (2019) found that on-the-job educational opportunities affect an employee's earning potential. Supporting employees to reach their potential is a method businesses could use to retain KSAs. Although on-the-job training would cost the company productivity and other resources in the short term (Becker, 1962), the company increases the potential for a future return on investment from investing in human capital needs.

The company leaders and employees enter a mutually beneficial relationship when an employment agreement occurs. However, if either participant ends the relationship prematurely, neither may fully realize the benefits. As employees increase their knowledge and skills through work experience, the more specialized and valuable those skills become to the organization (O'Bryan & Casey, 2017). The benefit of applying HCT principles to employees goes beyond wages and the addition of skills. Understanding how HCT principles contribute to employer-employee relations is vital to small business performance.

Some may argue that HCT's value is quantifiable by the extent employers support their employees. Most important to an employee-employer relationship is setting realistic goals, clear communication, and a keen sense of community and commitment (Simic et al., 2020). Employers supporting their employees by developing KSAs through education, on-the-job training, and building positive relationships are tenets of HCT. An IRO's ability to develop employees and relationships may contribute to business sustainability.

Restaurant Industry Classification and Evaluation

The restaurant industry encompasses many food service categories, but most share similar characteristics affecting business performance and sustainability. Restaurant owners often operate their businesses within a financially tight margin that relies upon balancing food and wage costs (Mun & Jang, 2018), depending on appealing menu items to maintain steady customer traffic. More informed consumers and the advent of social media have made consumers share their likes and dislikes easier and more frequently (Liu & Tse, 2018). Consequently, the value creation process for restaurants requires consumers to experience the type of service and quality they expect (Nemeschansky, 2020), sometimes without visiting the business. Customers' expectations differ based on how much they know about the type of restaurant they visit (Naderi et al., 2018). IROs must consider how consumers view their products and services.

Although IROs must remain aware of customer expectations, they must frequently operate with limited organizational resources. Restaurant owners work long hours and often open restaurants without the benefit of human resources or other formal operations education (Bradley et al., 2017). With the industry's demanding nature, owners must learn to analyze external threats and develop internal capabilities to be competitive. While restaurants share similar characteristics, there are some distinctions that industry professionals, academics, and the United States government use when classifying, describing, and categorizing restaurants. These distinctions affect a restaurant's available resources, what customers have come to expect, and its sustainable

competitive advantage. Therefore, IROs can benefit from understanding their unique consumers and additional resources outside the organization.

Restaurant Classifications

Classification systems provide structure for interpreting collected data and explaining results or strategizing for a competitive advantage. Restaurants are part of the hospitality and tourism industry, classified alongside accommodations (Parsa et al., 2020). The accommodations industry has a widely used single classification system, but unlike the accommodations industry, the restaurant industry lacks a single and consistent classification system (Parsa et al., 2020). Restaurant classifications provide academics, governments, and professionals with a systematic way to compare, contrast, and measure success or failure within the industry. Establishing classification systems improves the reliability and validity of research by providing a single reference frame for investigation and results (Canziani et al., 2016). In academic research, classification systems provide a common language for further study and shared insights. Still, a classification system is only as good as it is relevant to the industry, and without regular updates, the system becomes less relevant.

Researchers and government agencies have used two classification systems consistently. Although researchers sought updated classification systems, they base their examinations and explorations on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and the National Restaurant Association (NRA) classifications. (Barrows et al., 2016; Canziani et al., 2016; DiPietro, 2017; Parsa et al., 2020). Using the classification systems in tandem provides a complete picture of the industry. The United States,

Mexico, and Canada created the NAICS (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The three countries' appropriate agencies work together to update it every 5 years for a consistent method for gathering and analyzing statistical data by industry (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b). The production-based classification system, developed when manufacturing dominated the three countries, groups industries based on how an industry segment produces units. As more service-oriented industries grew, the primary classifications remained based on assembled units and added categories that veered away from this structure.

The NAICS has two classifications dedicated to serving food that include several categories. Restaurants and bars are part of the Restaurant, and Other Eating Places classification, which focuses on table service, food, and beverages served (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). The restaurant categories include full-service, limited-service, cafeterias, grill buffets, buffets, snacks, and nonalcoholic beverage bars. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). These categories address how restaurants serve food to consumers.

The expected service level changes as consumers experience a full-service restaurant compared to a quick-service restaurant. The difference in service level expectations also changes the staff's required work experience, dining environment, menu selection, prices, and food and wage expenses (Lui & Tse, 2018; Parsa et al., 2020). Additional categories include specialty food and drinking places, food service contractors, caterers; mobile food service; and drinking places with alcoholic beverages. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). These additional categories fit their classification structures and determine how restaurants serve customers.

Classification systems create equal comparisons and clear delineations between comparable items. The NAICS needs the ability for a consistent comparison. This gap became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic when full-service restaurants began accepting take-out and delivery orders for business survival (Brizek et al., 2021; de Freitas & Stedefeldt, 2020; J. Kim et al., 2021; K. Kim et al., 2021). NAICS lists full-service restaurants and quick-service restaurants separately. A patron of a full-service restaurant expects premium service, atmosphere, menu items, and prices (Shahzadi et al., 2018). When the service model changes temporarily or permanently, NAICS does not provide a straightforward way of accounting for these service changes. For example, a full-service restaurant owner may have added take-out and delivery services during the pandemic. Based on this change, the restaurant will receive customer reviews, incur different costs for sturdier take-out containers, and potentially need an expanded insurance policy. Other full-service restaurant owners may begin offering take-out of family meals requiring customer pick-up, not delivery. The two restaurant owners still have similar business models, but neither operates as expected from a full-service restaurant.

Anyone seeking to understand how full-service restaurants operate or stay competitive can no longer compare this full-service restaurant with another full-service restaurant that does not have delivery services. According to Parsa et al. (2020), as restaurant owners constantly adjust to changing consumer demands, the industry will continue changing operating models, leading to more restaurant variations. This evolving situation makes categorizing restaurants harder for researchers and industry experts.

Regardless, the existing classification system still lacks consumer-friendly distinctions. For example, separating bars from restaurants when both serve alcoholic beverages and food makes the classifications suitable for the industry but not necessarily a clear indicator of what a customer can expect when visiting either establishment.

NAICS categorizes restaurants based on how consumers wish to order and receive food but lack any reference to ownership, affecting consumer expectations. For example, a chain restaurant can access the parent corporation's financial, supplier, and human resource support (Gordon & Parikh, 2021). The owner's preferences may affect décor, available menu items, server training, prices, advertising, and the expectation of the consumer. An independent restaurant cannot access the same oversight and supporting resources (C. Lee et al., 2016). These differences may make a fine-dining chain restaurant look and feel very different from an independently operated fine-dining restaurant.

The NRA trade publication developed a companion classification system to reconcile differences between independent and corporate-owned establishments. The NRA conducts research, reports news, trends, and advocates with government entities for more than 500,000 restaurants (NRA, 2020). The NRA classifications use the same core categories as NAICS (Barrows et al., 2016) and segment restaurants by independent and chain ownership types (Parsa et al., 2020). Independent restaurants are locally owned and managed establishments without the benefit of corporate-owned financial and human resource support enjoyed by chain restaurant managers. Like NAICS, the NRA classification system provides owners with a common language, benchmark, and

measurement for restaurant industry success. The NRA's management categorization offers those in the restaurant industry insights into how restaurants with similar resources operate and compete for customers. Besides benefiting the restaurant industry, the combined classification systems provide researchers with distinctive characteristics needed to examine further and explore problems specific to each restaurant type. When considering how the management of organizational KSA supports the long-term survival of the restaurant, IROs' challenges are similar yet unique compared to their chain-financed and managed counterparts.

Classification systems allow government, industry, and professionals to benchmark and compare operational and financial success consistently. While this information provides valuable information for comparing restaurant industry members, restaurant owners rely on consumers patronizing their establishments and need a clear understanding of what makes them frequent their establishments. A restaurant's survival depends on return visits (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020) and positive word of mouth (H. Li et al., 2020; Uslu, 2020). Accordingly, restaurant owners seek to produce a positive customer experience which may create an advantage over their competitors (DiPietro, 2017). Those that review and measure restaurants often determine the expected customer experience by the restaurant's classification.

Types of Restaurant Evaluation

A restaurant owner's success depends on repeat business and positive organizational evaluations. Those evaluating the customer experience include journalists, consumers, and researchers (Adeinat, 2019; Blose et al., 2019; Parikh et al., 2017). Like

classification systems, establishing categories of evaluations provides them with distinctive characteristics needed to examine further and explore problems specific to each restaurant type. The communicated and shared consumer experience has a professional lens for research and restaurant benchmarking that can contribute to how IROs leverage consumers' feedback for improving performance.

For this study, I divided restaurant evaluations into three categories. The first category was formal evaluation via a standardized instrument, DINESERV, that researchers use to compare customer experiences within the restaurant industry (Adeinat, 2019; Tiago et al., 2017). The second category was professional and semiprofessional evaluations, including professional food critics whose articles appear in various media and curated reviews in guidebooks like Zagat (Parikh et al., 2017). The final category was user-generated content (UGC) or electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which are evaluations by consumers found in online review platforms like Yelp (Luo et al., 2020; Tiago et al., 2017) as well as social networks like Twitter and Facebook (Lepkowska-White et al., 2019; Litvin et al., 2018; C. R. Taylor, 2018). Consumers leverage these various sources when deciding which restaurant to patronize (Lepkowska-White et al., 2019; Litvin et al., 2018; C. R. Taylor, 2018; Xu, 2021). Independent restaurant owners rely on social media platforms to build a brand identity that their chain-based counterparts can afford to buy (Keller & Kostromitina, 2020). This widespread use makes these sources impactful to restaurant owners' ability to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage, making these types of measurement relevant to this study.

Formal Evaluation. Although not as readily used or available as guides and user-generated reviews, formal measurement instruments allow benchmarking and restaurant comparison. Benchmarking enables business comparisons (Barrows et al., 2016) and enables restaurant owners to see how their restaurant compares to the competition. Stevens et al. (1995) adopted the DINESERV instrument from SERVQUAL, an accommodations industry measurement instrument for specific use within the restaurant industry. Like all hospitality-based industries, the consumer determines whether the experience is good or bad. It is up to the hospitality business owner to decipher the consumers' feedback and make the necessary adjustments to remain competitive. A standard measurement tool affords a consistent way to compare customer reactions and the same experience.

Like any formal evaluation instrument, reliability and validity are essential to its use in research and industry. The DINESERV instrument has over a 95% reliability rating (Knutson et al., 1996). Researchers used the instrument in 88 academic articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, including the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and the *Journal of Food Service Business Research*, and the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. The instrument consists of 29 survey questions across five service dimensions: tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (Knutson et al., 1996). Although used by researchers, thorough questioning provides valuable information that IROs could use for strategic decision-making and gauge their competitive position. The tangibles dimension has a considerable number of questions. It focuses on the service environment or "servicescape," where consumers and

employees participate in the consumer experience and affects both parties in diverse ways (Kaminakis et al., 2019). Though the tangible dimension has more survey questions than other dimensions, Stevens et al. (1995) stated that no dimension is more important than another. The reliability dimension focuses on how consistent and error-free the interactions are between employees and consumers (Kukanja et al., 2019). The assurance dimension determines the competence and courtesy of employees when engaging with consumers. The responsiveness dimension relates to the speed at which employees address customer needs. Empathy relates to the attention and consideration shown to consumers during interactions. The combination of dimensions offers a complete picture of how consumers experience service quality and, thus, how well employees interact with consumers, all of which affect repeat business.

The DINESERV instrument results give restaurant owners an understanding of how their restaurant may cater to service expectations. When comparing customer expectations to customers' perceptions, Adeinat (2019) found that customers' expectations consistently exceeded their perceptions of their experience. The study's investigators also found that when restaurants focus on perceived service quality, they may exhaust their resources attempting to make perceptions meet expectations. The empathy dimension provides the best way to close the gap between expectations and perceptions. Restaurant owners who encourage and educate employees on demonstrating empathy during consumer interactions stand a better chance of closing the gap between consumer expectations and perceptions (Adeinat, 2019). This valuable insight sheds light on where an IRO can focus its efforts for competitive advantage.

Customer interactions between restaurant owners and employees impact customers' decision to return to the restaurant. Therefore, a restaurant owner's ability to gauge these interactions determines the restaurant's success in this key performance indicator (KPI). Kuo et al. (2018) determined the correlation between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty using the DINESERV measurement tool. The study's results directly connected service quality and a consumer's repeat visit. Positive service quality perceptions lead to repeat visits and a positive reputation for the restaurant (Xia & Ha, 2021). While empathy and assurance from staff positively affected first-time visitors, the tangibles, like facilities and personnel's cleanliness, had a significant impact when they returned. Kuo et al.'s (2018) findings reinforced Adeinat's (2019) results on the importance of empathy in employees and the importance of the perceived competence of employees during initial interactions. IROs can use such tools for ongoing competitiveness that promote long-term survivability.

DINESERV can also serve as a benchmarking tool. DINESERV provides evaluations that inform restaurant owners about which dimensions lead to customer satisfaction and what dimensions may need extra attention (Stevens et al., 1995). Classification systems allow restaurant owners to identify their competition (Parsa et al., 2020). These two industry standards allow IROs to improve their competitive advantage by understanding what consumers of similar restaurants found compelling that may lead to return visits.

Professional and Semiprofessional Evaluation. Professional restaurant evaluations have appeared in newspapers, magazines, and television for decades. The

influence of lifestyle journalists, chefs, and other industry professionals who evaluate restaurants and report their preferences have grown exponentially since the inception of food critics in the 19th century (Fusté-Forné, 2020). Consumers accept that professional evaluators use personal tastes and opinions based on their knowledge of restaurants to report on their experiences versus other journalism types that require objectivity (English & Fleischmann, 2019). Since the evaluators often work for media outlets, they target restaurants that appeal to their demographics (Parikh et al., 2017). By appealing to only those they believe may purchase their paper or magazine, the journalistic critics choose the restaurants to promote their platform and the restaurant, positively or negatively. Consumers assume professional evaluations are from experts (Kobez, 2018), making their reviews increasingly impactful to a restaurant's success. IROs must consider the impact of professional reviews on business performance and customers.

Professional reviews also provide more information for consumers to decide about the restaurant. A newspaper review has a higher word threshold allowing the reviewer to include more details about décor, service, ambiance, and the food (Parikh et al., 2017). Covering these broad categories also demonstrates the influence of food-related journalism on culture and media (Fusté-Forné & Masip, 2018), even beyond traditional newspaper-based reviews. The increased exposure to food culture led to a more discerning consumer and higher demand which small restaurant owners must consider.

Professionally edited guidebooks to direct the consumer review systems have added a level of restaurant evaluations. Guidebooks, such as the original Zagat's, are a

hybrid measurement tool that includes curated reviews from actual restaurant patrons, then published and distributed at a cost. Zagat editors started by publishing the scores and commentary on restaurants they solicited from their friends and family (Paynter, 2018). A method of scoring based on distinct categories provided a level of consistency for comparison, even though the consumer's scores were subjective. The reviewed categories were like newspaper critic reviews, including environment, food, and location. Unlike newspaper reviews, Zagat did not allow an abundance of space for the editors to wax poetically but used space efficiently. Allowing consumers to share their opinions in print with others outside their sphere of influence began the movement toward UGC. It marked a turning point from journalist-based reviews to consumer-based reviews.

UGC and eWOM. UGC and eWOM provide additional opportunities and challenges for IROs. The Zagat editors provided the only way consumers could share experiences beyond private communication or contribute their opinions to guidebooks that provided limited inclusion (Paynter, 2018). Restaurant-focused research also turned from supply-oriented to customer-oriented research centered on customer satisfaction, expectations, and behaviors (Rodriguez-Lopez et al., 2020). The onset of the internet led to the development of rating platforms where patrons provide immediate feedback and affect the perceptions of other consumers around the world (Dossena et al., 2020; H. Li et al., 2020; Naujoks & Benkenstein, 2020). This shift in the diversity and inclusion of more consumer-based experiential feedback created a considerable change in the impact of professional reviews (Kobez, 2018). A form of UGC, eWOM, increased the ability of consumers to immediate feedback beyond their close circle of influence (Chakraborty et

al., 2022; English & Fleischmann, 2019; Kobez, 2018; J. Lee & Kim, 2020; Lepkowska-White et al., 2019; Litvin et al., 2018; Maslowska, Malthouse, & Viswanathan, 2017) allowing the collection of millions of reviews on topics, including restaurants and foods. IROs must consider the risks and benefits these review mediums have on business performance.

Customer reviews by electronic means can also have marketing implications that influence buying decisions. C. R. Taylor (2018) shared that eWOM can be more potent in changing purchase habits than direct advertising. A New York court demonstrated the importance of word of mouth by consumers in a defamation case where Zagat's reviews negatively affected a restaurant's reputation (Bunker, 2018). To mitigate the negative impact of consumer reviews, Lepkowska-White et al. (2019) caution that a business owner needs to invest in oversight of these channels to ensure comments do not tarnish the business' brand or reputation. The ability of consumers to give and receive immediate feedback expands a restaurant's reach, which can have positive or adverse effects.

When restaurant patrons find the menu, food, environment, or service interactions lacking, they tell other potential patrons. The more people share about a restaurant or a menu item; the more likely others will see it as credible and make it part of their purchasing decision (Hayat & HersHKovitz, 2018; Zhao et al., 2020). Chakraborty et al. (2022) found that consumers are more likely to share a negative experience than a good one. However, J. Lee and Kim (2020) found that consumers were likelier to post when restaurant owners ensure reviews receive positive or negative affirmation. In addition, J. Lee and Kim also found that consumers were slightly more likely to post positive reviews

than negative ones. Though findings may lead to different conclusions, these studies highlight the need for consumers to share their experiences, expanding their sphere of influence. Consumers have considerable power over whether a restaurant has new or return visitors, affecting the restaurant owner's survivability. An IRO or manager increases the benefit to their restaurant when they commit to managing social media and contributing to reviews by acknowledging the feedback.

Online feedback extends the consumer experience for existing and potential customers. With online review sites (e.g., Google, Yelp, TripAdvisor) and now delivery apps with online review capabilities (e.g., Uber Eats, Door Dash, and Postmates), consumers provide feedback more effortlessly than in the past and reach more people than ever before (Kang & Eshkol-Taravella, 2020). Not only is direct feedback possible, but potential consumers reading reviews react more strongly to negative reviews than positive or moderate reviews (Y. Liu et al., 2020). Consumer reaction means that restaurant owners need to manage the consumer experience and oversee the various review platforms.

In-person and take-out dining allow consumers to critique interactions with restaurant staff and owners from arrival, order, meal, and departure. Delivery-based services lack interaction and may expand the exchange to a third-party provider over which the restaurant owner has little control. Xu (2021) found that when consumers ordered food delivery, their feedback included the interaction with the driver and reflected on the restaurant whether the driver was from the restaurant or an independent

third-party service. IROs must consider this dynamic when considering the availability of resources and uses of third-party service providers.

The choice to purchase also influences the likelihood that a customer will provide feedback through an online source. Xu (2021) stated that consumers are likelier to share their experiences on social media platforms when paying for a meal. While reviews provide valuable information for consumers and an opportunity for IROs to gain insights into gaining a competitive advantage, the same reviews may also harm an organization's reputation or offer unbelievable information to consumers. Maslowska, Malthouse, and Bernritter (2017) found that consumers increased their intention to purchase when reviewed ratings were between 3.8 and 4.2. Consumers' choices to buy goods lessened when they rated products lower or higher than this range. The ratings and the evidence from the research supported the notion that consumers view higher ratings as false and unreliable leading them to discount the ratings and potentially the product. Of course, the researcher focused on consumer goods and food experiences with more dimensions that appeal to a consumer's senses versus durable goods may elicit different results.

Formal measurement instruments like DINESERV and less formal measurement methods like star ratings on online platforms provide restaurant owners valuable information on what consumers want in their dining experience. In researching the restaurant industry, how restaurants and consumers measure consumer experience lays the groundwork for how organizational KSAs impact a restaurant's success. Providing a positive consumer experience relies heavily on the employee's KSAs. The previous sections focused on how the industry and researchers identify and measure success and

how consumers measure and share their experiences. The following section focuses on the independent restaurant's environment and the people whose KSAs are essential to positive customer interactions.

Operational Environment of Independent Restaurants

The IRO may not have formal education or experience managing a restaurant or employees before starting a restaurant. An IRO may gain the needed competence through trial and error and the innate drive for success (Elias et al., 2018; Romero et al., 2019). Research differs on the level of impact prior experience and education have within the restaurant industry. Muhammad and Salma (2021) found that owners and managers must possess the needed intellectual capital to harness organizational capabilities for optimal performance. Jogaratnam (2018) saw that education and experience positively affected performance. Jogaratnam's findings support that IROs can successfully transfer knowledge to employees through formal policies and procedures and demonstrative means.

IROs may also obtain knowledge from restaurant staff. Wellton and Lainpelto (2021) found that owners also learn from their employees. However, most knowledge transfer in small business independent restaurants is tacit (Muhammad & Salma, 2021) and, therefore, not written down but transferred when demonstrated by those within the organization. Employees are more likely to share tacit and explicit knowledge when they trust one another (Ogunmokun et al., 2020) and are committed to the organization (Ouakouak & Ouedraogo, 2019). This lack of documented expertise makes organizational knowledge vulnerable to employee turnover or resistance to sharing

knowledge for job security. The IRO must be aware and responsible for capturing, using, and retaining organizational expertise in a small independent restaurant environment.

Performance, People, and Knowledge

IROs, managers, and employees work closely to prepare food and operate small independent restaurants. How well these individuals work together can determine customer loyalty and sustained performance. IROs measure performance using the KPIs of profitability, sales volume, growth, and goal achievement (C. Lee & Hallak, 2018; C. Lee et al., 2016). Many factors affect KPIs, which the IRO must maneuver through awareness, strategic plans, and daily management. Human resources are essential to restaurant performance and sustainability, but other factors, such as work environment and internal and external forces, work interdependently towards the same end. Examining the literature highlighted several factors that directly or indirectly leverage organizational KSAs. Common factors that affect KPIs include slim profit margins, seasonal surges and declines in customer visits, unpredictable food costs, and the reliance on positive customer interactions for success (Mascho & Mao, 2017). While most of these factors focus on external forces out of the control of IROs, such as price and seasonality, there is an opportunity to control customer interactions by managing internal resources and employee-customer relations.

Employees play a significant role in a restaurant's success through their productivity and customer interactions. Sheehan et al. (2018) found that effective talent management makes IROs more successful at hiring and retaining skilled employees, which is essential for organizations that rely on their employees to interact with

customers. Though an IRO cannot be involved in each customer interaction, they are responsible for hiring and managing employees and establishing a work environment conducive to positive customer interactions.

A restaurant's work environment often includes long hours, shifting schedules, and demanding customers. The work environment challenges lead to excessive stress and higher employee turnover than in other industries (M. Cho et al., 2021; Gordon & Parikh, 2021; C. Lee et al., 2016). Scholars have linked restaurant employees' excess stress to higher levels of substance abuse (Bufquin et al., 2021; Cain et al., 2020; Hight et al., 2019). This challenging work environment may make it harder for IROs to achieve the desired customer interactions consistently.

The challenges IROs face are not limited to challenging work conditions. In addition to the typical restaurant environment, the COVID-19 pandemic initiated other changes to working environments, some of which may last postpandemic (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020; Kim, 2020). Some changes include employees' inability to fit nicely into a long-time job role, forcing them to seek employment elsewhere (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020), which requires business owners to invest in more employee recruitment and training. The population faces political, economic, and social uncertainty (P. Sharma et al., 2020), which increases anxiety. Businesses have had to find ways to serve consumers at a distance (Yawson, 2020) and change their configurations to allow for barriers between customers (S. Taylor, 2020), which provides challenges in service-based industries. These challenges impact the operational environment, requiring adjusting the organizational KSAs for successful navigation.

An IRO can counteract the adverse effects of a typical restaurant environment. Gordon and Parikh (2021) identified four main themes that restaurant managers and employees feel demonstrate care and support, which builds loyalty and helps retain organizational knowledge. Leadership, human resource management, work atmosphere, and well-being are the four themes. In addition, J. Kim et al. (2021) found that the quality of work-life, particularly during a crisis like a pandemic, reinforces an employee's commitment to change that lasts beyond the crisis. Within each theme identified by Gordon and Parikh and the quality of work-life proposed by Kim et al., there are multiple activities and behaviors that an IRO or manager may perform or exhibit to increase an employee's sense of support and security. The IROs approach to leadership affects every identified attribute and influences the behaviors and actions of everyone in the organization (Mostafa, 2019). The impact of IROs' decisions about whom to hire, how much to pay, how to train, manage, and what benefits affect the restaurant's performance.

Many positions within a restaurant require little training or prior experience. However, employees perform essential functions in menu preparation and customer interactions, from greeting and taking orders to serving food (Bichler et al., 2021; Son et al., 2021). The interdependent relationship between product and service inherent in the restaurant industry means that IROs cannot separate the two without considering the implications to the other. Therefore, IROs must address the low-entry employment barriers to reduce essential functions' performance risk.

The low-entry employment barriers attract individuals just entering or re-entering the workforce and contribute to the high turnover rate inherent in the industry. The lack

of obstacles leads to more employment opportunities for the underrepresented, such as undocumented immigrants, unskilled laborers, the formerly incarcerated workers. (Shigihara, 2020). However, IROs still require employees to fill positions that require specific knowledge, skills, and experience. The required KSAs for IROs and their restaurants can often develop through informal workplace learning (Kelliher et al., 2020; Mustafa & Elliott, 2019). IRO's understanding of required KSAs for long-term survivability is crucial when turnover is a concern. The IRO must also consider ways to retain the needed KSAs in a high turnover environment.

IROs rely on sharing knowledge with and among employees for daily operations. Employees' willingness and enthusiasm for learning and sharing knowledge becomes nearly as important as their education and experience (Liao et al., 2018; Perez de la Lastra et al., 2020). An employee's ability and willingness to share their knowledge with others allows the IRO to capture and disseminate organizational knowledge among existing and new employees. The more employees share knowledge, the better the organizational performance (Ahmed et al., 2020). In an industry with high turnover, employees are more transient, making knowledge transfer even more imperative. Of course, willingness to share knowledge also requires sharing knowledge in ways others can receive and use it.

In addition to a willingness to learn and teach, an employee's ability to promote and complete positive interactions with co-workers and customers contributes to positive KPIs. Mohamad et al. (2020) found that restaurant owners and managers most looked for competence in entry-level employees in attitude and behavior, emphasizing empathy for

understanding a customer's needs, aligning with Stevens et al. (1995) DINESERV measurement tool. Customers have more ways to share their perceptions and experiences at restaurants, impacting return decisions and first-time visitors. IROs must hire the right employees who exhibit the correct KSAs and ensure the transfer of organizational KSAs to maintain and improve performance.

IRO's Multiple Roles and Responsibilities

The limited resources inherent in independent restaurants force IROs to hold the dual owner-manager (OM) role. Through their leadership and management approach, OMs determine whether they and their employees operate in ways that meet established performance goals (Jogaratnam, 2017a). This dual role structure offers challenges and opportunities for operations and strategic planning. OMs make the most of opportunities and mitigate negative consequences from challenges by applying specific competencies (Elias et al., 2018; Jogaratnam, 2017a, 2017b; Kleynhans et al., 2018; Ntlhanngoe & Chipunza, 2021; Shum et al., 2018). Elias et al. (2018) and Kleynhans et al. (2018) defined owner-manager competence as the KSAs of the person most influential in and responsible for business success. Although Elias et al. (2018), Jogaratnam (2017a, 2017b), Kleynhans et al. (2018), Ntlhanngoe and Chipunza (2021), and Shum et al. (2018) agree that competencies are necessary, they hold differing opinions and study results on required competencies. Simultaneously fulfilling two roles requires competence in managing day-to-day functions and establishing strategic plans that guide the restaurant for long-term success.

The literature on management and leadership includes common characteristics required of individuals for positive organizational performance. One of the most influential to an independent restaurateur is entrepreneurial competence. Entrepreneurial researcher opinions vary between explaining abilities as traits, but all agree that they impact a business's success and growth (Assaker et al., 2020; Elias et al., 2018; Gustomo et al., 2019; Østergaard, 2019; Stanczyk et al., 2020; Velu & Manxhari, 2017; Wahyuni & Sara, 2020). Researchers agreed that one of the traits that entrepreneurs possess is the competence to understand and navigate risk (Durst & Ferenhof, 2016; Oyakhire & Makpor, 2021; Stanczyk et al., 2020; Wahyuni & Sara, 2020). With the slim profit margins in the independent restaurant business, there is always a threat of expenses exceeding profit, and the restaurant fails. There is also the risk that an IRO's competitors may outperform them in terms of price, innovative menus, environment, marketing schemes, or employee competence. Successfully managing the competitive threats faced by IROs filling the OM requires operational and front-line management competence.

Scholars have also identified needed KSAs for OMs but categorized them differently. Elias et al. (2018) identified entrepreneurial, managerial, and functional competencies as OMs competency requirements. Velu and Manxhari (2017) grouped needed professional, personal, and social competencies. Shum et al. (2018) further clarified the differences required by OMs and compared the competencies of the front-line and director-level managers. In a list of competencies needed in order of importance, they found that front-line managers require people, personal, and business leader competence. Director-level leaders require business leadership, personal and then people

competence. This contrast is understandable because the director level does not require a more personal approach to motivate employees (Shum et al., 2018).

On the other hand, front-line managers are essential to knowing their employees and engaging with them to encourage them to achieve and even exceed goals. Positive business performance requires the OM to adjust and apply its KSAs based on the needs of the business (Velu & Manxhari, 2017). When fulfilling both roles, the OM must demonstrate flexibility depending on their target audience, task, and environment.

When engaging as the front-line manager, the OM must prioritize using their people skills to use resources to the best advantage of the restaurant's operations. One aspect of managerial competence critical to meeting this goal is the ability of the OM to mobilize employees to perform the necessary activities (Crick et al., 2023; Gustomo et al., 2019). The service staff is critical to customer satisfaction in a restaurant, leading to positive financial performance and long-term sustainability. The employee's perception of the leader's competence affects their willingness to trust and follow the leader's direction (Bufquin et al., 2018; Hight et al., 2019; Kleynhans et al., 2018). An OM's ability to maximize employees' use of KSAs relies on employees' willingness to follow their guidance and directives.

An employee's desire to trust may affect the ability of the OM to meet the goals established in their role as director. Employees' perception of OM competence also impacts their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Zhang et al., 2021). When an OM faces staff that lacks trust in their ability to direct activities in a manner that leads to success, the working environment becomes unstable. An unstable

work environment may lead more experienced employees to establish themselves as de facto managers (Kleynhans et al., 2018), which causes chaos and confusion in an already hectic environment. An OM may avoid this scenario by mastering the necessary managerial competencies.

Employee mobilization to meet customer needs is essential to business performance. OMs must communicate desired outcomes and then successfully plan and direct the collaborative efforts of employees. Veliu and Manxhari (2017) categorized specific skills related to managerial competence and had small business managers rank them according to importance. Veliu and Manxhari's study result reinforced Elias et al.'s (2018) findings that risk assessment, ranked in the top five of professional competence, is one of the essential skills IROs and OMs require. Communication was rated the highest as one of the personal competencies required, but written communication was not a top-five competency. These results are insightful when the lack of written knowledge may cause IROs to be overly reliant on retaining employees, so they do not leave with essential KSAs.

An organization's essential KSAs must be retained beyond the individual knowledge worker's attrition. Due to resource constraints, small businesses often rely on informal learning (Coetzer et al., 2017, 2019). This approach emphasizes tacit knowledge in small companies over documented knowledge (Berraies et al., 2021; Kelliher et al., 2020), making retaining employees and promoting learning sharing an imperative for IROs. Small businesses may benefit by promoting learning to retain ambitious employees or those who favor learning (Susomrith et al., 2019). An OM may implement human

resource management (HRM) strategies that can help mitigate KSAs and competency loss through employee attrition.

An IRO's lack of financial resources may affect its ability to establish a formal HRM role. However, it is more likely that if an IRO has previous experience with HRM practices, they are more likely to implement practices (Mupani & Chipunza, 2019). Whether or not an IRO can afford to implement formal HR practices, the restaurant still requires policies, job descriptions, and training programs to ensure fair hiring and employment practices. The OM must ensure these activities occur with appropriate oversight. However, resource limitations may prevent this and require the OM to prioritize the HRM practices to those most impactful to the business (S. Li et al., 2019). The OM may consider different HRM practices impactful depending on the current situation. For example, the OM must ensure they conduct interviews and make selections according to anti-discrimination and fair pay practices when hiring. They must also ensure that a new employee receives appropriate training. When an employee fails to show up to work without calling, the OM must have previously advised the employee of the consequences outlined in the proper policy and acted as necessary. These described activities and circumstances require managerial competence in HRM.

Over time, knowledge development from trial and error may remedy OM's competency gaps. OMs may fill the competence gap by seeking expert assistance, but the size of the business may limit the capacity of a company to hire an HR resource full-time or engage a consultant (Cajander & Reiman, 2019). Without HR resources, OMs will work more closely with employees, from hiring them to setting schedules, taking care of

payroll, disciplining them, training them, and answering their HR-related questions.

Lacking an organizational structure that includes professional HR, the OM may learn to employ HR practices simply from the learning process.

A lack of HR resources is another example of the flat organizational structure IROs face, and this type of structure has distinct benefits and challenges for the OM. This flatter hierarchy allows OMs, employees, and customers more significant and consistent access to one another (C. Lee et al., 2016). There are benefits to the OM's embeddedness in the day-to-day operations where they get to know their employees. The first is the OM's visibility and ability to directly demonstrate desired behaviors and core values to employees. Employees emulate the OM, and the collective attitudes and behaviors form the organizational norms or culture by which employees determine their roles and expected behaviors (Hopkins, 2018). The organizational culture guides employee behavior, and in the close quarters of an independent restaurant, the OMs shape the culture by demonstrating the desired behaviors.

The OM also controls the selection of new employees. The rareness of human resources is the most vital contributing factor to achieving a competitive advantage (M. Cho et al., 2021). An OM can select employees with skills that fit the organizational culture. In the restaurant industry, hire fit is more associated with the potential employee's attitude than with the knowledge and skills employees learn on the -job (Mupani & Chipunza, 2019). When an OM directly observes and interacts with employees, they can better identify their unique KSAs. Through direct engagement, an OM can better position the employee for higher individual performance to support

positive business performance. For example, Zhang et al. (2021) found that front-line restaurant employees who prefer multiple activities at once were more engaged and satisfied, making them less likely to leave. The benefit is to the OM and the employee, who may find greater satisfaction in engaging in activities that fit their naturally preferred behaviors. If an OM does not have that level of engagement with their employees, they may overlook the best way to contribute to positive performance.

OMs interactions can benefit internal employee relations and performance while improving customer relations and brand perception. An OMs engagement with customers allows them to solidify their reputation or brand (Mathayomchan & Taecharungroj, 2020). Independent restaurants do not have chain restaurants' names and brand recognition because of their limited number of locations and their advertising ability (Kim & Song, 2020). This lack of a well-known identity makes OM's involvement in establishing the brand increasingly important. During the restaurant's startup phase establishing the brand image relies heavily on the restaurant's competitive productivity (M. Cho et al., 2021), as displayed by the attitudes and behaviors directed at outperforming competing firms (Baumann et al., 2019). An OM demonstrates those behaviors by whom they hire, how they lead and reward their employees, and what information and behaviors they promote to their customers. The OM's ability to articulate and develop consumer value may be the competitive differentiator in the IROs business environment.

Restaurant OMs set expectations and standards for employees. They oversee how the employee completes tasks associated with the processes necessary to provide

customer service, achieve food safety, and achieve other KPIs. In return, an employee expects the OM to set expectations and provide direction and compensation for their work. Fang et al. (2021) found that organizations with high contact service models may see increased profit margins when high employee satisfaction. The OM's oversight of the work environment and employees plays a large part in the restaurant's success. This interdependent relationship may help keep the business operational if everything remains the same, but it may require different manager-employee relations when changes occur.

Organizations may require internal changes to remain competitive in the market. To be ready for change, an organization must have a durable foundation of processes (Kosasih & Saparuddin, 2020) and leadership that spans beyond the owner or a handful of people (Berraies et al., 2021; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). If an IRO fails to prepare the organization for change by promoting awareness or normalizing change, the owner may limit organizational members' ability to adjust quickly, making innovation more difficult (C. Lee et al., 2022). When an IRO promotes leadership as a function versus a title or role, they empower everyone to share their KSAs and identify opportunities to meet organizational goals. Establishing a foundation of processes, sharing KSAs, and setting expectations of change as an everyday occurrence are critical for an IROs readiness and ability to adjust to market changes and remain competitive.

Fundamental Challenges Facing IROs

Research into small independent restaurant survival requires understanding some of the challenges most small business owners face. IROs may often have a weak financial structure caused by lower entry barriers to start a restaurant, low-profit margins, and

higher food costs (Mun & Jang, 2018). For example, some municipalities require food safety certifications before a restaurant owner qualifies for a business license. However, starting a restaurant does not require a culinary degree or occupational approval, making the industry open to anyone with sufficient capital and support.

Once the restaurant begins operating, the cost of food becomes an integral part of its success. Food costs vary based on economic factors, natural disasters, crop failures, shifting import prices, and other situations outside a business owner's control (Uddin et al., 2020); such costs may affect profitability. The determination of overall profitability depends heavily on the cost of food and the menu item price (Mun & Jang, 2018; Tyagi & Bolia, 2021), and item sales. A menu item's sales price must offset the restaurant owner's food cost to make any profit. Menu item profitability calculations vary and may be simple or complex depending on the chosen measure (Lai et al., 2020). Because restaurant ownership does not require any specific business education (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; Zahra, 2021), even the most straightforward methods may require an IRO to seek professional assistance. Lower profit margins in a customer service-driven industry that pays employees fairly to create positive customer experiences affect profitability. IROs must consider these competing factors for long-term sustainability.

Wages

Whether in the restaurant's cleanliness, food preparation, or taking customer orders, its overall appeal depends on employees. With the cost of wages, needed personnel, and limited profits, a restaurant may have limited resources and employees with limited skills (C. Lee et al., 2016). Although Kim and Jang (2019) found that higher

minimum wages led to greater productivity up to 2 years after the wages increased, the restaurant industry still has the most employees paid a minimum wage (Repetti & Roe, 2018). The short-term impact of wage increase has both a negative and positive effect on revenue, but after 1 year, the advantages and disadvantages level out, minimizing the effect (H. S. Kim & Jang, 2020). Premium wages invest in restaurant survival by attracting and retaining qualified workers, leading to greater productivity. Owners with slim profit margins may not see the strategic benefits of paying higher wages. Whether the owners proactively increase wages, state and federal legislatures may force increased minimum wage levels (Repetti & Roe, 2018). IROs must consider legislative changes and their impact on the restaurant's performance.

The wage increases may take time to impact IROs, depending on the restaurant's location. In geographic areas where a forced increase occurred, the expected impact of higher prices and elimination of jobs was negligible (Allegretto & Reich, 2018; Dube & Lindner, 2021), which discredits two of the arguments against higher minimum wages. A more proactive approach to wage increases would allow the IRO the time to right-size staffing by increasing salaries and retaining staff with the necessary qualifications to improve operations. The long-term survival benefits exist when wages rise in conjunction with improved operational management—costs and sales. For restaurants, improvements must include operational processes that expand the customer base from first-time to returning customer sustainment.

Food Safety

Safe food handling is a core operational process in restaurants, as adherence to food safety regulations ensures consumers' health and the restaurant's reputation. Foodborne illnesses still occur from poor food handling practices, contaminated equipment, and ingredient sources, leading to fewer return customer visits (Ali et al., 2019). Managing a foodborne illness outbreak far exceeds the costs of preventing it by implementing and enforcing proper food handling (Bartsch et al., 2018). Because staff hygiene often causes foodborne illness in restaurants (Lin & Paez, 2020), it is the most significant food-handling operational process (Douglas et al., 2018; Gadelrab & Ekiz, 2019; Harris et al., 2019). IROs must be aware of adherence to food safety standards and how they may influence consumers' perceptions.

IROs should also recognize their limitations compared to established chain restaurants. Independent restaurants lack the same protocols as chain restaurants for competent and consistent staff hygiene, including handwashing, using gloves in food preparation, checking meat and poultry temperatures, and not working when sick with diarrhea and vomiting (Environmental Health Specialists, 2019). Restaurant standard operating procedures should include food safety with appropriate checks and balances to mitigate foodborne illness instances. Clark et al. (2019) found that implementing a food safety culture influenced by the owner's or manager's safety behaviors and observation establishes an environment where employees demonstrate consistent handwashing, reducing foodborne illness. IROs can benefit from promoting a food safety culture as well.

Managing by example is one part of a successful food safety program. A restaurant owner cannot be everywhere simultaneously but must leverage their internal resources. One way of doing so is identifying respected and reliable employees who may also help by setting an example for others when they employ proper food safety behaviors (Lin & Paez, 2020). Although restaurant owners affect how their employees take handwashing and other safe food handling practices seriously, leadership by example does not eliminate the need for proper written procedures, training, and monitoring. Monitoring, refresher, and new employee training reinforce practices and improve adherence (Lin & Paez, 2020). Restaurant owners significantly affect how their employees take handwashing and other safe food-handling practices seriously. Proper written procedures, training, and monitoring reinforce those practices. Because a restaurant owner cannot be in multiple places simultaneously, the owner needs reliable employees to help enforce and encourage safe food handling practices. Food safety affects public health during regular times. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, public locations where people prepare, serve, and eat food increased the risk, scrutiny, and need for sanitation practices in nearly every restaurant category.

Food Safety and the Pandemic

The contagiousness of the COVID-19 virus led to the economic crisis and the need to close businesses to keep people safe. It also resulted in a food safety crisis requiring new cleaning and hygiene practices for restaurants to reopen after the widespread closures. IROs had to contend with new safe distancing seating requirements when able to reopen (Dube et al., 2021). With businesses switching from in-person dining

to take-out and delivery services, the importance of safe food handling beyond the kitchens expanded to include front-of-the-house staff and delivery drivers (de Freitas & Stedefeldt, 2020). The evolving requirements and recommendations from governmental and private organizations required more frequent training of existing and new employees that did not previously require training. In small, independent restaurants without formal training programs, the owner's ability to effectively manage the operational changes impacted the business's ability to remain open. As restaurant owners struggled to adjust to new requirements, they had to rethink how they handled food safety requirements (Seo et al., 2018). IROs must determine how to meet the business's financial needs and the mandatory food safety requirements because of the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, the restaurant industry employed food safety measures but rarely had a spotlight placed on those measures. Because of the pandemic, all restaurants are under the local governments' microscope, and consumers developed a heightened sensitivity to sanitation and food safety standards (de Freitas & Stedefeldt, 2020). Consumers have become more concerned with food safety in restaurants than general food safety from items self-preparation (Byrd et al., 2021). IROs must consider how food safety standards evolve to meet changes in consumer expectations.

Recent literature includes information IROs can use to meet new consumer expectations and demands. In a study of independent restaurants 3 months into the pandemic, Brizek et al. (2021) found that 81% of respondents noted the importance of consumer confidence in successfully recovering from the economic disaster caused by the pandemic. Seo et al. (2018) found that recovery from food safety crises occurs when

restaurant owners use a bolstering strategy that reminds consumers of prior safe food practices. Since the COVID-19 virus spreads through airborne particles and remains on surfaces for hours to days depending on the surface type (Rawlinson et al., 2020), messaging about food safety must include references to newer and prior safe food handling requirements. Building consumer confidence begins with practicing safe food handling practices that mitigate foodborne disease and illness and then messaging the steps taken to consumers and potential consumers.

Messaging how often employees clean surfaces or the types of hospital-grade disinfectants safe in food handling environments may bolster consumer confidence and reduce the fear of contamination on food containers. An experimental field study by K. Kim et al. (2021) tested the impact of returning consumers and increased sales of messaging versus not messaging consumers on their food containers about food safety. The respondents validated their favorable predisposition to repeat purchases when the restaurant included messaging versus no messaging, which increased sales of labeled menu items. The findings suggested that IROs may obtain good sales outcomes through proper messaging of food safety practices.

Balancing safe food handling practices and messaging gives consumers a sense of safety positively associated with the restaurant. IROs are best positioned to promote an all-encompassing environment of clearly articulated safety standards for their staff and consumers (Lin & Paez, 2020; Putra & Cho, 2019). To maintain this expectation, IROs must stay alert, interpret changes based on their business model, and integrate them into their operational practices while taking advantage of customer messaging.

Innovation

Adaptive behaviors benefit businesses the most when owners leverage those behaviors and seize opportunities to innovate. An IROs tendency to innovate stems from a riskier personal preference for small business owners because of the lack of resources to support the innovation (Maron et al., 2019). Zopiatis and Theocharous (2018) provided an effective way for owners to seize opportunities through their employees' innovative behaviors and ideas. However, owners and managers must support innovation (Kremer et al., 2019), empowering employees to take the risk inherent in an innovation-oriented environment. Supporting innovation increases performance in terms of sales and reduction of costs (Kremer et al., 2019; C. Lee & Hallak, 2018; Suryawan, 2020)—an IRO who performs better than or as well as the competition contributes to a restaurant's survival. The common catalysts for innovation are competition and customer feedback that provide insight into increasing customer satisfaction (Chou et al., 2020; El Azzouzi & Ulutagay, 2021; C. Lee et al., 2019). When considering competition as a catalyst, it is essential to understand the sources of competition and how that impacts whether to lead through innovation or follow others' innovation.

The competitive landscape has changed how companies innovate. Before the advent of the knowledge-based economy, business owners monopolized products for prolonged periods to achieve a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The time of service and product monopolization shortened and increased competition (Phillipson, 2020). The market is more competitive than others because small business restaurants are easy to replace (Chou et al., 2020). In addition to intangible resources, a business's brand

and values have become a differentiator (M. Cho et al., 2021) by which consumers make choices and businesses realize competitiveness. When attempting to distinguish a restaurant through the reputation of menus, service, or price, the owner must differentiate their offerings in one or more of these areas to remain competitive and sustainable.

IROs must consider the number of available resources when investing with tight profit margins. Taneja et al. (2016) discussed how small business owners are open to innovation based on risk tolerance but may shy away from being a first mover for fear of failure. A small business restaurant that lacks prestige compared to competitors may innovate on a smaller scale by making minor changes to existing practices, which provides a lower risk of failure (Perez de la Lastra et al., 2020). However, without the risk of keeping up with the competition, a restaurant will lose the new and returning consumers needed to keep sales outpacing expenses. At a minimum, a restaurant owner must keep pace with competitors by mimicking successful innovations or implementing a unique element to an existing invention (Cho et al., 2020; C. Lee et al., 2019). The need to attract consumers to a restaurant is at the heart of the competition, which requires successfully meeting customer expectations at an ongoing capacity, innovatively or otherwise.

Small businesses' resource limitations make it necessary for owners to make resource-based choices about where to invest and provide the best return on investment. Consumers play a role in innovation by providing innovative ideas through reviews or feedback during staff interactions (Chou et al., 2020). One of the best ways an owner can determine customer satisfaction is by asking the customer or reading online reviews.

Small business owners with limited resources are typically heavily involved in running the business. They may not have time to read reviews or take advantage of the information shared through their staff's consumer interactions. These factors, including the menu items consumers choose, indicate customer satisfaction and their likelihood to return (Luo et al., 2020). A customer-centric IRO will identify the most impactful improvements for restaurant survival and find innovative ways to do so.

Management and process innovation may not be as noticeable to the customer, but consumers benefit when a restaurant runs smoothly. The types of innovation that can help a restaurant vary, but researchers identified five categories in which innovation occurs: product, process, marketing, management, and service (C. Lee et al., 2019; Najib et al., 2020; Phillipson, 2020). Like other small businesses, restaurants can only implement or manage innovation with the proper structure and environment to support it. Some small business restaurant owners identify and implement innovation only after a competitor does it first to lessen the risk of failure in their establishment (C. Lee et al., 2019). This approach works well when visible or experiential innovation occurs, such as using a new ingredient to design a menu item or a new way of greeting a customer upon arrival. In any case, internal management and processes must align to allow innovation to occur.

A restaurant owner can replicate visible innovation. However, other types of less visible innovation are still a resource but may take longer to be imitable. According to resource-based theories, unique resources are most valuable to a business's competitive advantage. In a study comparing low, average, and high-performing independent

restaurants, C. Lee et al. (2016) found that those who innovate in management, process, and service are more likely to be high-performing than restaurants that do not innovate. The owner, managers, and employees with the proper KSAs will likely offer the best insights into where and when innovation can improve overall performance.

Transition

Section 1 provided the study's foundation, including the identified problem, what factors contribute to it and why it is significant, ways to explore the problem using a resource-based research lens, and a review of relevant academic literature. Section 2 will include a restatement of the purpose and description of the role of a researcher in ethically exploring the problem. I share more detailed information on the affected population and the ethical means of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data to ensure saturation, reliability, and validity. Section 3 includes the research findings, practical application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, further research, reflections, and the conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 begins with a description of the role of the researcher and the process used to identify participants. This section also includes a description of the research design and methods, population and sampling techniques, the practices used to ensure ethical standards, data collection, organization, and analysis techniques, and how those techniques can lead to reliable and valid research.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative multiple-case study explored IROs' strategies to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and sustain the businesses beyond 5 years. The study's targeted population included IROs with no more than 20 employees or contractors operating in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States who have successfully run businesses for longer than 5 years. The study results may positively affect social change by increasing small business survival rates, which impacts businesses' ability to achieve corporate social responsibility (CSR) aligned with communities' interests (Stoian & Gilman, 2017). Socially responsible small businesses could provide jobs in the community, ultimately, boosting the local economy by providing employees fair wages, helping employees develop skills, and offering employees flexible work hours to support better work-life balance.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this qualitative inquiry was to act as the primary data collection instrument. Korstjens and Moser (2017) found that when the data collection instrument is a person who will engage with participants, it is essential that they

acknowledge any subjectivity regarding the topic and identify ways to mitigate it. To do so, I applied several mitigation techniques, including asking open-ended questions during interviews and maintaining consistency with documented interview and observation protocols. Researchers can further minimize bias by identifying subjectivity, remaining aware, and adapting behaviors to lessen the influence of the researcher's worldview throughout the research process (Barrett et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020). A researcher must maintain ethical conduct when working with human participants by selecting, engaging, and reporting research findings. To ensure ethical behavior, I adhered to the three principles of The Belmont Report by demonstrating respect, fairness, and concern for the well-being of the participants throughout the process (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Also, I shared the risks and benefits of the research by employing documented informed consent so that individual participants understood what they were consenting to.

I have 20 years of human resources experience, with 10 years focused on talent development through instructional design and process improvement. During the 1990s, I trained as a chef de cuisine, managed a historical mansion, oversaw catered events, and prepared meals for the homeowners. These experiences gave me insights into the work and management in the food-service industry. I applied these experiences and knowledge of the food-service industry to evaluate processes and design instructions to improve processes for a corporate and entertainment food service contractor. I have never owned or worked in a restaurant. In addition to food, human resources, and talent development experience, my husband and I have owned small businesses for the past 25 years. As a

small business owner, I understand small business ownership's inherent challenges and opportunities. My experience could have influenced my viewpoint, leading to an overly biased study.

The research design yields the framework for a researcher to conduct investigations ethically with both an awareness of bias and the appropriate techniques in place to counteract it. (Barrett et al., 2020). Using an interview protocol reduces personal prejudices by focusing on themes gleaned from the literature review and crafting open-ended questions that will not lead the research participant. I used a semistructured interview technique with open-ended questions and adjusted my line of questioning based on the participant's responses. When exploring a phenomenon, the semistructured interview technique provides the flexibility needed to allow the participant to guide the interview and the interviewer to observe and take note of experiences with limited bias (Saunders et al., 2019).

Participants

In qualitative research, the dependency on participants is not solely on representing the population but on their ability to provide data relevant to the research question (Fusch et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2020). Identifying the participant criteria is the first step in a rigorous research design. As the researcher, I gained access to knowledgeable individuals and retained their participation throughout data collection. The dependency on the participant makes physical access to participants even more critical (Anderson, 2017). The study's participation criteria included independent, small-

business restaurant owners who have used successful strategies to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and have been in business for the past 5 years or more.

Novice researchers may encounter unforeseen issues when recruiting, gaining, and maintaining participant access (Vuban & Eta, 2019). To be prepared for potential problems, multiple methods were used to recruit and gain access to participants. I identified potential participants using the Data Axel database of U.S. businesses, conducted in-person visits to restaurants, and posted the request on professional social media networks. Further, multimodal recruitment methods require multiple communication vehicles that include email, flyers, social media posts, and a script to request participation during in-person visits. The communications made potential participants aware of their rights if they chose to participate, as well as how to contact me with any questions. An example of the email requesting participation and providing research participants' rights is in Appendix A.

In qualitative studies, relationship building, joint actions, and empathetic reactions between the interviewee and the interviewer build the rapport necessary for research (Prior, 2018). The connection between the two parties makes the difference between relevant and rich data with stories, written documentation, and access to the participant's natural environment (Saunders et al., 2019). I began building rapport when I asked the IROs to participate in the study. To prepare for these interactions, I thoroughly reviewed the literature that included the people and work environment indicative of the restaurant industry. Then, I designed a clear and concise request for participation that I can verbalize and include in written communications.

Once I secured access to a participant, the rapport-building continued. McKenzie (2019) shared that participants are more likely to speak freely when comfortable with the interviewer. To create a more relaxed interaction, I dressed in clothing appropriate to the setting and used uncomplicated language. I limited my role in the interview by asking concise questions and being mindful of my body language and tone of voice. The employed research method and design further informed my approach during the session with participants.

Research Method and Design

Research methods in the social sciences are the procedures used to explore and investigate lived experiences (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). The research design operationalizes the procedures, which determines the data collection and analysis techniques (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019; de Valk & Goldbach, 2021). The research question determines the method and design, of which there are many. A researcher must choose the best approach to gather and analyze the most applicable data (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). Qualitative investigation is the most applicable method and design for a study that analyzes how IROs manage organizational KSAs.

Research Method

Research methods define the researcher's approach to investigating a phenomenon and lay the groundwork for data collection and analysis techniques. Specifically, qualitative methods allow researchers to study lived experiences in context, interact with participants, analyze rich data, and report findings (Alam, 2021; Azungah, 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). In contrast, quantitative methods seek to count how often a

phenomenon occurs, collect sufficient data, and generalize it across the population (Queirós et al., 2017). Investigating lived experiences of those in authority requires exchanging words and descriptions and recalling decisions made and their consequences. Quantifying this phenomenon does not provide sufficient information to understand why or how a person makes decisions, nor does it provide enough flexibility in the research method to follow where the research leads. Qualitative methods allowed me to observe how participants engage with their natural environment and solve problems. Quantitative and qualitative research methods answer different questions (Reilly & Jones, 2017). The research question for this study is about *how*, rather than *how many*, the question quantitative research attempts to answer.

The mixed-method approach to research may be richer in data and insights (M. Saunders et al., 2019), but it does not allow the researcher to focus on the *how* research question. Mixed-method research also requires additional time and resources (McKim, 2017), which can challenge those novice researchers with limited time and resources. Another advantage of qualitative methods is the researcher's ability to immerse themselves in diverse types of data (Gehman et al., 2018) that help more thoroughly answer the research question. For the current study, the focus on human interactions from first-hand experiences of IROs provided significant personal insights into the reasoning for and impacts of decisions made regarding organizational KSAs. Quantitative methods may measure human interactions but will not provide the same personal insights as qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are also more manageable for a single researcher than mixed methods.

Research Design

I chose a multiple-case study design to gain firsthand knowledge of an IROs experience. Rigor in case study data collection is necessary to stand up to the reader's inspection of the study, which determines the validity of the results much more than compared to probability-based methods (Yin, 2018). Case studies are versatile enough for researchers to apply diverse philosophical approaches and techniques (Harrison et al., 2017). The versatility of case studies and the needed rigor make it a research design well-suited for a novice researcher who can put various research techniques and methods into practice.

As a novice researcher, I took an intuitive, epistemic approach and explored the multiple meanings of participants through an interpretive philosophical lens. A multiple-case study versus a single case study increases reliability and validity by applying replication logic across multiple-cases (Eisenhardt, 2020; Gehman et al., 2018), which adds validity to any emerging themes. Quantitative researchers have cited the lack of generalizability of case studies as one reason it is not as reliable (Saunders et al., 2019). Using multiple cases, I sought to reduce the likelihood of this criticism of the results.

There are similarities when comparing multiple-case studies to focus groups, like the resulting rich contextual data from firsthand experiences. Lauri (2019) shared that focus group research design provides rich data because of the multiple viewpoints captured together with participant interaction. However, when not combined with a mixed-methods study, the sole data source of a focus group is the participants. While valuable, the resulting data are only as good as the participant's willingness to share their

experiences openly. A known limitation in focus group designs is the lack of openness of participants when answering the questions (Kumer & Urbanc, 2020). Skewed results may occur if participants lack trust in one another, or one person dominates the conversation. An experienced moderator must ensure everyone can participate, keep the discussions and responses associated with the question, and allow new themes to emerge and data saturation (Lauri, 2019). With multiple sessions, focus group researchers estimate that at least four to five sessions may be enough to achieve data saturation (Henninck et al., 2019; Lauri, 2019). This number of sessions would result in hours of transcription for a single session, which is time-consuming for a novice researcher. That said, the benefit of a focus group may not prove valuable enough to warrant the necessary time. Henninck et al. (2019) found that while a single focus group identified 60% of the themes for a research topic, a single in-depth interview identified 56% of the themes in the same research topic. A 4% difference in data gained within the first interaction, with a considerable amount of upfront coordination of schedules, people, and places compared to an in-depth interview with a single participant, made a focus group unsuitable for this study.

Organizational ethnography is also a contextually rich design. It provides opportunities to observe and interview participants and focuses on culture and interactions between people within the culture (Schwartzman, 1993). A study on hiring, managing, and retaining organizational KSAs will not answer questions about organizational culture but identify how people resolve business problems. Ethnographic studies focus on participant observation and discussions but do not capture archival

records or documentation that triangulates the data (Yin, 2000, p. 187), adding greater context by seeking knowledge through the documented past. An organizational ethnography design also requires a more extended period of data collection, leading to more time and financial investment than a novice researcher may have when completing a degree program (Fusch et al., 2017).

Case studies provide a means of exploration that produces stories from the participants. The researcher identifies themes from the stories and relates them to the literature (Azungah, 2018). The thematic analysis offers critical insights that answer the research question. This inductive approach to case study research allows the participant to drive the direction of the research through the data collected during interviews (Azungah, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019, p. 52). This data collection method provided valuable information and a specific challenge for researchers.

A challenge with qualitative research is determining the number of participants needed to provide enough insights before starting the study (Alam, 2021; Johnson et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Reaching data saturation depends on having a large enough sample of the population under study to gain those key insights. Further, data saturation affects the reliability of the study (Yin, 2018). The most common method of qualitative data saturation is when no new themes emerge from the data analysis (Alam, 2021; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

For the current study, the thematic analysis occurred within the individual case and then across all cases. Each interview was immediately transcribed using the speech-to-text recording software, Audiate, to gauge the saturation point. Then, I reviewed the

accuracy of the transcription using the backup recording, conducted a preliminary analysis, and conducted a high-level comparison to previous cases. As I completed each case report, I conducted a cross-comparison of themes. I continued sampling and interviewing until no new themes emerged.

Population and Sampling

Qualitative inquiry aims to gather and analyze rich data in ways that inform both theory and practice. Critics of qualitative research methods cite nonrandom sampling and lack of generalization of results as reasons why this method is less reliable than random sampling (Guest et al., 2020; Ishak & Bakar, 2014). However, the richness of data produced in qualitative research requires an interpretive analysis that is more detailed than quantitative methods like probability sampling (Ames et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2020). To collect rich data, a researcher must target the population that has experienced the topic under study.

In a case study, the researcher identifies the sample that best represents the case and determines the type of participants required (M. Saunders et al., 2019; Verleye, 2019). IROs are a distinct restaurant industry population requiring a concise and targeted method of identifying potential participants. A detailed description of the method and purpose of selection aids in rigor and validity (Schreier, 2018; Shaheen et al., 2019). Because of the challenges facing the restaurant industry resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, I leveraged multilayered purposeful sampling techniques that allowed for the needed flexibility and rigor in gathering data (Prior, 2018).

Purposeful sampling techniques are most appropriate when targeting highly specialized populations (M. Saunders et al., 2019). This group of techniques is also appropriate when there is a need to identify participants in the best position to provide relevant data (Campbell et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020; G. Sharma, 2017). Criterion sampling ensures that the sample population includes those best suited to provide data that will answer the research question (Durdella, 2019d) and will be the primary sampling technique. The research question determined the unit of analysis. In this instance, the unit of analysis was independent small business restaurant owners that have been in business 5 years or more in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Added to that is the IRO's ability to successfully manage KSAs.

The criteria for the first unit of analysis included IROs in business beyond 5 years. I used the Data Axle database of U.S. companies that provides information on ownership type and employee information to identify restaurants. I then verified the information once I had certainty about the second qualifier, the successful management of KSAs. This qualifier presented a problem because of its subjectivity. However, in retail environments like restaurants, customer reviews using eWOM platforms influence consumers' purchase decisions more than other methods (Litvin et al., 2018; C. R. Taylor, 2018). Therefore, consumers determine a restaurant's success by their comments. Because the IRO and employees play a vital role in a customer's positive experience, multiple positive reviews imply the successful use of KSAs. To identify the sample population that meets the "successful" criteria, I examined the restaurant's consumer reviews on Yelp. I chose Yelp to determine success criteria because the platform owners

have provided a professional method of collecting crowdsourced data (Sun & Paule, 2017), and influential users are known to positively affect a business's success (Bejarano et al., 2017) with a greater than 76% likelihood of trustworthiness (Pranata & Susilo, 2016) and the owners have instituted policies to detect and remove fraudulent reviews (Yelp, 2021).

The initial criteria included nonchain restaurants in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States with more than 50 reviews that received three and a half or more stars at the time of retrieval. With this group identified, I began the next phase of sampling, which included the tandem approach of convenience and network sampling. Like snowball sampling, network sampling leverages the researcher's professional network (Durdella, 2019d) and participants to gain additional participants (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017; Schreier, 2018). Convenience sampling leverages participants that are readily available and willing to participate in the study and not based on any other criteria, which is the least favored method (Durdella, 2019d; Shaheen, et al., 2019) when used independently. Using the two methods in tandem may have minimized the limitations of using one method.

There are challenges with network and convenience sampling techniques. Network sampling adds additional flexibility in gaining participants; it also has particular challenges that could make it a waste of time. The time waster occurs if the recommended participant is not representative of the population that would best answer the research question. However, the initial selection criteria of ownership type and time in business helped me quickly determine the participant's viability. Then validating the

Yelp ratings clarified the referral's suitability before I contacted them. Critics of convenience sampling see it as not ensuring that participants meet the criteria of the population under study (Durdella, 2019b; Schreier, 2018). The initial sampling technique ensured a homogenized sample of the target population before engaging in convenience sampling by physically visiting restaurants to recruit participants. Therefore, it strengthens the weakness inherent in convenience sampling.

Targeting a specific population could lead to extreme bias (G. Sharma, 2017), but an explicit research design mitigates the effects of nonrandom sampling prevalent in qualitative studies (Ishak & Bakar, 2014). Qualitative research aims to find appropriate participants versus identifying those that most represent the general population (Shaheen et al., 2019; Welch & Piekkari, 2017). Although convenience and network sampling is less valid and reliable, criterion sampling reviews all cases that meet the defined unit of analysis, providing more reliable participants (Schreier, 2018; Shaheen et al., 2019). Utilizing both sampling techniques provides a more valid and reliable result.

There is no textbook agreement on the number of participants needed to achieve data saturation in qualitative research. The researcher determines data saturation (Guest et al., 2020; M. Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, it is up to the researcher to ensure the study reflects a sound and explicit description of data collection, saturation criteria, and decisions. Without explicitness, future researchers cannot trust the validity of findings (Guest et al., 2020). However, experienced-based recommendations identify sample sizes between 5 and 15 participants as adequate to achieve data saturation (M. Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Evaluating data saturation is an ongoing process that concludes when

no new themes emerge from the collected data. The deep analysis of results is at risk if the number of sampled participants exceeds the researcher's ability to handle it (Ames et al., 2019). For this reason, I targeted at least five participants and analyzed primary and secondary data after each interview. Once no new themes emerged, I ceased data collection.

Ethical Research

Beneficence, nonmaleficence, respect for autonomy, and equity mark the tenets of ethical research that guide investigators when faced with the ethical tensions and dilemmas inherent in research (Mauthner, 2019). The researcher oversees and applies ethical principles and cannot successfully conduct research without participants sharing their experiences and inviting the researcher into what can be their most intimate moments. Researchers and their institutions ensure ethical conduct throughout the participant/researcher interactions through procedural, situational, relational, and existing ethical principles (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). The assignment of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) case number confirms that a study's design includes the rigor needed to achieve ethical standards (Wells, 2021). The Walden University IRB approval number of 06-07-22-0189211 indicated that this study's design met the required ethical rigor.

The design included procedural ethics concerning autonomy by personally recruiting participants without coercion, limiting data collected to required information, and securing all collected data for a minimum of 5 years. I scanned paper documents and entered electronic data into my computer's cloud-based, backed-up password-protected folder. To ensure privacy during data collection, once a participant met the criteria and

was part of the study, I assigned a code name to the person and their place of business in all collected data and the case study results. The initial information gathered about the person and their place of business remains in a separate, secure electronic file with their signed consent form. Any paper-based documents and signed consent forms collected are in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

Ethical research practice requires a formal, written, audience-appropriate, consent, consent form for it to be procedurally valid (Millum & Bromwich, 2020). The researcher must also ensure the participant understands what it means to participate in a study and their rights to resign at any time (Dantas & Gower, 2021; O'Sullivan et al., 2021). The participants received a copy of the informed consent form as part of the recruitment process. Participants could read, sign, or acknowledge the consent form before starting the interview, observations, or accessing any private secondary data sources. Proceeding in this manner allowed the participant to ask questions and ensure understanding of consent.

All study participation was voluntary, and no participant received an incentive. I did not work with any partner organization to recruit participants. However, I used a network sampling technique that could have caused risk when I chose not to work with a recommended participant. I lessened potential risk by ensuring all referring participants or members of my professional network were aware of the criteria provided in the consent form and that I could not disclose whether the referred person participated. A sample of my script informing referring members of this confidentiality measure is in Appendix B. If the participant chose to withdraw from the study, they could have

informed me via email or by phone using the phone number provided and in any in-person meetings.

The meeting location for a research interview may vary based on the interviewee's preference, comfort, and the interviewer's safety (Rodriguez-Dorans, 2018). Because the population operates restaurants, they may work 7 days a week and have limited availability outside their restaurant. I made an appointment and asked the participant to meet me near their place of business either before or after service. If the participant could only meet at their place of business, I requested the meeting occur before or after service and stressed the need for a quiet space.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. In a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument that questions, listens, observes, and reviews artifacts related to the lived experience of informants (Welch & Piekkari, 2017). Having a living, thinking being as the data collection instrument, the participants find a person with whom they can relate and share experiences. The humanity of the data collection instrument and the person providing the data means that each brings preconceived notions of the topic under study, the data collection process, and outcomes. As the primary instrument, the researcher must be a confidant for the informant that protects their identity and mitigates personal bias in collecting and analyzing provided information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). However, a researcher's choice of theory, topic, data collection, analysis, and final report reflects the philosophical lens and preconceptions they approach the research project (Barrett et al., 2020). In qualitative

inquiry, the research community expects preconceptions making the need for transparency of investigative positions and approaches imperative to the study.

Researchers have other means of combating their personal bias, including triangulation.

Data triangulation provides an approach that increases validity and reliability by collecting and analyzing multiple data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Fusch et al., 2018; Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Methodological data collection uses multiple techniques during data collection that allows a deeper contextual and comprehensive understanding of complex situations (Abdullah et al., 2009; Flick, 2018; Yin, 2018, p. 128). I used multiple data collection techniques, including semistructured interviews, observation, and archival records review. Using the primary technique, semistructured interview, allowed me to hear from the IRO what they recall and perceive as their strategies. Participant observation allowed me to see what happens during interactions aimed at achieving the strategy. An archival review using Yelp data exposed me to patrons' comments regarding their perceptions and interactions with the restaurant related to the IROs strategies shared during interviews.

Interview data, my primary data collection method, provided the voice for informants of the study (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). To keep vital questions in focus throughout each interview and create more reliable data collection (Arsel, 2017; Castillo-Montoya, 2016), I used the interview protocol in Appendix C. The interview protocol provided a tool that creates more reliable data collection. The IRO may have viewed knowledge and the use of organizational knowledge differently from what previous researchers found. These differences required that I probed deeper or asked for

clarification to ensure I captured their meaning accurately. A semistructured interview technique allows enough structure and flexibility for new themes to emerge from the participants' answers (Morgan Brett, 2021). It improves understanding by probing for more profound meaning than just the initial answer (M. Saunders et al., 2019, p. 445). For this reason, I used a semistructured interview technique.

The supporting data collection techniques were direct and internet-mediated observation. Observation is a fundamental practice of research that allows real-time capture of interactions and activities instead of relying on the recall of an informant (Kawulich, 2012; Sussman, 2016), making the researcher a witness to the events (Wästerfors, 2018). The choice of observation technique must fit the reason for observation (Durdella, 2019c; M. Saunders et al., 2019). Observing the IRO and employees demonstrating their knowledge in exploring strategies for managing organizational knowledge in a restaurant added context to the interview data. In the observer-as-participant role, the observer participates only enough to be in the same area as the activity takes place to capture a firsthand account (Gold, 1958; M. Saunders et al., 2019). Limiting engagement by the observer limits their influence on the behaviors of the group other than those natural to having someone unknown watch activities. A selective observation approach pinpoints the observer's focus on a specific activity and individual (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Since observation is a secondary data collection method, I used a selective observation guide in Appendix D to triangulate the information provided in the literature and interviews.

As part of the archival record review, I used internet-mediated observation using information in the public domain (Anabo et al., 2019; M. Saunders et al., 2019). Consumers contribute first-hand accounts of their experience at a restaurant, including consumed food and service interactions using online platforms. A restaurant's measure of success relies on positive word of mouth that leads to repeat patronage. Rodriguez-Lopez et al. (2020) found that customer satisfaction and restaurant operation elements that drive satisfaction are essential. Consumers' use of online reviews to choose a place to eat has increased. This shift to customers sharing feedback on their experiences directly with one another makes online reviews a key indicator of how well organizational knowledge management strategies are employed. For this reason, I triangulated the restaurant's Yelp reviews, interviews, and observations to form a complete picture of the use of organizational knowledge.

Achieving reliability and validity in qualitative data collection instruments requires a specific design for each method. In semistructured interviews, testing questions with an independent third party and revising them ensures the responses provide data relevant to answering the research question increasing reliability (McGrath et al., 2019; Polonsky & Waller, 2019). The questions must also have a direct correlation with the topic of study and be validated to verify that no questions fall outside the case's bounds (Durdella, 2019a; Polonsky & Waller, 2019). A researcher collects observational data using detailed field notes and consented recordings where possible. When recordings are not possible, a researcher should capture detailed notes immediately following the observation, reducing the likelihood of data inaccuracy (Johnson et al., 2020). To further

reduce inaccuracies, I had research study participants check that their responses have been accurately captured. Having a study participant confirm data accuracy before report finalization increases the validity and rigor of the results (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Johnson et al., 2020; Ruggiano & Perry, 2019).

Data Collection Technique

Valid and reliable research results require the investigator to take a reflexive approach when capturing and reporting procedures so that the reader may follow the lines of inquiry to the conclusion (Roberts et al., 2019). My methods of collecting data include semistructured interviews, observation, and archival record review. An interview protocol, located in Appendix D, provides the interview framework and question flow. The interviewer can increase the opportunity for participants to share their experiences by using open-ended questions (Opdenakker, 2006; Polonsky & Waller, 2019). The open-ended questioning technique allows the IRO to recollect experiences and share them without the trappings of declarative statements required by closed-ended questions. The disadvantage of this approach was the need to balance active listening, note-taking, and appropriate probing for more information (Opdenakker, 2006; Polonsky & Waller, 2019). I relied upon my human resources training to form well-worded questions, demonstrate empathy, and ask clarifying questions to draw out relevant information. To maintain focus during the interview, I took notes to enable recall, used speech-to-text recording software, and had a backup audio-only recorder. After the interview, I reviewed my questions and the interviewees' responses. I then made the necessary adjustments for the following interview.

Gaudet and Robert (2018) found that an interview guide establishes a consistent protocol across multiple interviews. This approach counteracts researcher bias or inconsistencies by exposing all participants to the same impetus for their responses. The protocol included eight relevant follow-up questions that reduced the likelihood of reverting to questions or responses reflecting my worldview. It also notes how to open and close the interview, ask for additional time for member checking, and arrange for secondary data collection appointments. Combining the guide with the other interview techniques creates an effective data collection method.

I used member checking to ensure that I correctly interpreted the critical tenets of information shared by the interviewee. I requested that the interviewee review a synthesized summary and provide feedback on anything I may have incorrectly interpreted. Koelsch (2013) surmised that member checking affects both parties engaging in the interview. The interviewee maintains greater equality in the interview process, and the interviewer can reflect upon their potential bias and worldview. This approach gives the participant a voice in the final study by ensuring the researcher accurately captures the participant's meaning.

Secondary data collection began with the direct observation technique, which provided greater insight into the interview data. In direct observation, the observer collects data from informants that include sequencing of events focusing on who, what, when, where, and how, includes clues to the researcher of other contextual details during data analysis (Ciesielska et al., 2018; King & Stahl, 2020; Wästerfors, 2018). While observing, several things are happening, and writing notes may distract the observer from

capturing critical statements or movements. When in the field, capturing brief notes with jottings and drawings provides triggers for later reflection and more complete detailed field notes after completing observations (Kawulich, 2012; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018; Sussman, 2016).

Immediately completing detailed field notes following the observed event increases the collected data's reliability. The subsequent field notes with greater detail of witnessed events provide thick descriptions (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018) that allow the researcher to reflect on the event during data analysis. The advantage of observation is asking for clarification and gaining a deeper understanding of behaviors and activities at the moment they occur. The disadvantage of observation is the synchronistic way the investigator must participate and capture enough details to make sense of the notes later for the researcher to create the detailed field notes. There is also the need to describe witnessed behaviors, discussions, and actions without overt interpretation. Researchers use general methods to gather sufficient observational details and ensure the capture of a sequence of events, a description of the environment where the observation occurs, and enough details of the observed event to enable analysis (Ciesielska et al., 2018; Wästerfors, 2018). Capturing these elements makes it easier to complete more detailed field notes. I used the observation guide in Appendix D as an outline for detailed field notes and a queue of what to observe in the field.

The final type of secondary data is archival. I reviewed archival data via internet-mediated observation and by reviewing organizational records. Archival data provide information that confirms, refutes, or offers a different point of data available to explore

IRO strategies. The first archival record type was Yelp reviews. The reviews provided the consumer's voice related to how strategies shared by the IRO land with their patrons. The benefit of using archives is the leisure of reviewing as time permits and not falling under the same time limitations a participant may require when interviewing or observing (Yin, 2018). This data collection method uses existing documentation, including personal emails, personnel records, or online reviews, making it a noninvasive data collection method (Das et al., 2018). The disadvantage of archival data not in the public domain is the reliance upon the IRO to provide relevant data. A business owner may be reluctant to provide confidential data, or the data may be inadequate and not provide relevant information (M. Saunders et al., 2019). As the researcher captures data, the analysis begins by cataloging and organizing data for continuous analysis within and across cases.

Data Organization Technique

Using multiple data collection methods to triangulate findings provides more valid data. A case study protocol requires the collection of a database of all information collected during fieldwork (Yin, 2018). Managing the data from the time of capture through phases of analysis and reporting requires a transparent chain of evidence that will increase the reliability of the findings (Yin, 2018). The security of the chain of evidence includes replacing all identifying characteristics with a code known only to the researcher that will protect the confidentiality of the participants (M. Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2000). Managing multiple data sets, beginning with chronologically organizing data, then moving on to categories, and grouping information with clear labeling, allows for ongoing systematic data analysis (Coffey, 2018). To maintain the confidentiality and

protection of my research participants, I converted all materials to an electronic format in a secure cloud storage account. I maintained all hard copies of data in a secured file cabinet which only I have the key to access. All soft copy and hard copy data will remain secure for 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred all hard copy data and permanently delete all soft copy data from the computer and secure backup.

Data Analysis

Academic investigators use qualitative research to understand and interpret the sample population's beliefs, actions, and experiences. The strategy for case study analysis requires forethought and the willingness to *play* with the data in diverse ways that allow patterns to emerge (Yin, 2018, p. 167). According to Flick (2018), methodological triangulation provides researchers with a means of linking data using different research methods, leading to a comprehensive understanding of complex issues and situations. An IRO's application of KSAs within their organization is a complex topic. I better understand how this topic may lead to a successful and sustained independent restaurant through the methodological triangulation of interviews, observations, archival records, and literature.

Durdella (2019b) likens qualitative data analysis to storytelling which begins with breaking down the information into parts, identifying the differences and similarities, then putting it back together to tell a holistic story that answers the research question. de Casterlé et al. (2012) cautioned that novice researchers benefit from a framework that guides them through the process. This multiple-case study follows Yin's (2011) 5-phase analysis. It includes (a) assembling the data using interviews and observations, (b)

disassembling the data by coding it, (c) reassembling the data into themes, (d) analyzing the themes, and (e) forming conclusions from the resulting themes.

I applied thematic analysis for this study to derive my conclusions from the collected data. The thematic analysis provides the necessary iterative process as described by Durdella (2019b) and includes precise steps that lead to complete analysis (Barratt et al., 2011; Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lester et al., 2020). Using thematic analysis, I began with a single case unit of analysis and primary data source, the IRO, and their answers to the interview questions. Ayres et al. (2003), Braun and Clarke (2021), Durdella (2019a), and M. Saunders et al. (2019) found that the thematic data analysis technique requires a thorough understanding and awareness of the context provided by the primary data sources. I read the transcripts multiple times to increase my understanding and awareness of the data collected. After the initial review, I highlighted words and phrases relevant to the research question and literature review to establish a set of preliminary codes. This multiple review process increased my ability to determine repetitive statements and meanings related to the research question. I used these preliminary codes gleaned from the transcripts to allow the words of the participants to drive the analysis, then connect back to the literature and the research question.

Bonello and Meehan (2019) warned in their study that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) does not take the place of knowing and understanding the participant's meanings they share during data collection. Although I used CAQDAS, my multilayered review process ensured I stayed close to the participants

meaning and did not rely solely on CAQDAS. Archival data sources underwent the same thorough review for understanding and familiarity. The data from various sources either converge to tell the same story or diverge at some points to show differing viewpoints and other areas of interest (Yin, 2018). Both convergence and divergence of data offer valuable insights.

Throughout the analytical process, I tracked vital findings and insights by creating memos documenting *what, when, why, and how*. Documenting these internal conversations and insights adds to the credibility of the study's findings (Lester et al., 2020) and lays the path to conclusions about the data (Yin, 2018). The coding process occurs throughout the analysis process. The researcher must return to the codes and continue combining and connecting the information as themes emerge within the individual case and across cases. To finalize coding, I loaded all data into Microsoft Excel. I built a database to use as my chosen CAQDAS for cataloging and final coding of the interview and observation data.

Yin (2018) warned a novice researcher to focus on core findings related to the research question to demonstrate a solid case study. Once all data were sufficiently coded, I combined the coded segments into categories that correlate to critical concepts of the literature review, which leads to themes. I used replication logic across all cases, completed this process for each case, and then completed a cross-case analysis focusing only on similar themes across all cases. Once I cataloged and categorized the data, I correlated the key themes to the conceptual framework of RBV and the literature published during my study's data collection and analysis phase.

Reliability and Validity

As the researcher fulfills the role of the instrument in qualitative research, it requires a level of transparency in data collection and analysis different from quantitative research because of the subjectivity required for interpretation. The case study approach to qualitative research offers precise methods to promote reliability and validity, from triangulation of data and methods to case study databases that show all data collected and how the researcher analyzed and interpreted the final report (Yin, 2018). I applied these methods in this multiple-case study to varying degrees to ensure the construct validity and reliability so that the findings can transfer to future research.

Reliability

Reliability allows readers of the final study to follow the researcher's path logically and coherently to their conclusions without errors. Written protocols for data collection make a study stronger by having a straightforward means of identifying how researchers collect information; without them, data collection efforts may become more difficult (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Opdenakker, 2006). The case study database of ordered, labeled, and categorized information offers another means of reliability. According to Patton (1999), a technical side to qualitative study does not mitigate creativity but adds rigor and reliability using systematized methods. The case study database documents the methods used and is a playbook for how the researcher conducted their investigations, made decisions, and concluded their reported findings. To increase dependability in the final report, I requested participants conduct a member check of summarized data to ensure the accurate capture of their experiences.

Validity

To consider research valid, credible, and reliable, the reader must trust the inferences made by the researcher (Fitzpatrick, 2019). That trust stems from the researcher's clear and concise description of the tools, methods, and resources used (Daniel, 2019) to identify the topic, capture data, and report on results. Real-time field observations in the natural environment gave me more time to build trust with participants and capture more detailed descriptions and understanding of the topic under study. Creswell and Poth (2016) found that participants with prolonged proximity to the researcher have greater trust in the researcher and provide thicker descriptions adding to the accuracy of the data collected. Koelsch (2013) found that the time with the participants allows the researcher to capture the truth better as understood and shared by the participant. A single or even two data collection methods may not increase the validity of a study, but adding prolonged time in the field, member checking, and data triangulation to capture differing or similar points of view further increases the overall validity (Yin, 2018).

Explicitly documented data collection methods and population sampling could provide future researchers with a transferable research structure that could apply to a different population (Daniel, 2019). Although the results may differ because of the qualitative nature of the inquiry, a researcher can formally validate the technical accuracy of a published study (Makel et al., 2022), which promotes transparency and confirms the appropriateness of procedures.

When a researcher attains adequate data saturation, they provide valid results by exhausting all plausible themes (Guest et al., 2020), meaning there is nothing left to discover from the population. The ongoing and immediate analysis of collected data allows the researcher to identify saturation as early as possible and more accurately (B. Saunders et al., 2018). The immediacy of the saturation will ensure that the researcher knows when to begin to finalize the study results at the earliest possible time.

Transition and Summary

I began Section 2 by describing my role as a researcher and how I identified participants. This section described the research design and methods, population and sampling techniques, the practices I used to ensure ethical standards, data collection, organization, and analysis techniques, and how those techniques led to reliable and valid research. In Section 3, I present research findings, how the findings apply in professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, a reflection of my experience throughout the doctoral study process, and the study conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

This qualitative multiple-case study explored IROs' strategies to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs and sustain the businesses beyond 5 years. The population included three independent restaurant owners who have operated restaurants in southeastern Pennsylvania for over 5 years. The presented data came from conducting semistructured interviews using open-ended questions and observing the IROs as they performed their responsibilities. A semistructured technique gave me the adequate structure and flexibility to identify themes from the participant's responses (Morgan Brett, 2021). Observing the owner participants provided more context (as described by King & Stahl, 2020) to the data captured during the interviews. I organized captured data using Microsoft Excel to track all categories, codes, and themes. The findings included five first-order themes so defined because they occurred more than 15 times throughout the cross-case analysis. The first-order themes included the following items: use the owner's prior success, set clear expectations, build upon employee competencies, know the needed KSAs for success, and know the required personality/attitude for the culture, with at least one second-order conceptual theme for each first-order theme.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question was as follows: "*What strategies do IROs use to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to sustain the business beyond 5 years?*" The participants' experience and type of restaurant varied from a decade with casual and smart casual restaurants to more than 50 years operating fine dining

restaurants. All participants had owned multiple restaurants for over 5 years, had varied education and experience in kitchens and restaurants, and performed owner-manager duties. The commonalities among the owners' responses stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic, where they all experienced closures and the challenges of reopening with limited skilled staff and increased prices for raw materials. The participants' descriptions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Descriptions

Participant	Participant description
P1	<p>A restaurateur with over 50 years of experience, beginning with their family-owned restaurant.</p> <p>Owned and managed several fine-dining independent restaurants.</p> <p>Consulted for other independent restaurants.</p> <p>Formally trained chef.</p>
P2	<p>An entrepreneur and restaurateur who started culinary training as part of a rehabilitation program in prison.</p> <p>Owned and managed four independent restaurants over ten years, including casual and smart casual.</p> <p>Planning to open a fine-dining restaurant.</p> <p>A formerly trained chef.</p>
P3	<p>A partner and manager of a multi-site independent restaurant venture.</p> <p>Planned a new casual restaurant/bar.</p> <p>A 20-year + hospitality and restaurant industry veteran.</p> <p>No formal chef's training but has culinary experience.</p>

The participants shared how they acquire, manage, and retain the KSAs within their organization. Do et al. (2022) referred to the effective utilization of resources through learning that leads to resiliency and innovation as resource-based management initiatives. The participants demonstrated this effect in building organizational resilience and sustained operations through the economic downturn that occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the more consistent ways they sustained operations were by using their prior experiences, styles, and natural tendencies to direct all efforts within the restaurant. All participants normalized change, causing less upheaval as they adjusted based on the unstable external environments. They also allowed their experienced employees more leeway to use their own knowledge to benefit the business and focused on supporting less experienced employees with additional training and direct supervision.

Table 2 lists the themes identified from the interview responses and observations. The five first-order themes occurred 15 times or more across all cases. The five second-order conceptual themes occurred more than 12 times within the five first-order themes. While each first-order theme is unique, some second-order themes were redundant based on the RBV conceptual framework. The *manage and select* talent second-order themes arose as the most frequently shared within the interviews and observations with a 36% frequency. The *owner commitment* theme at 28% was unique to the most frequent primary theme. These findings support RBV researchers' identification of the practical application of resources as critical to competitive success (Zahra, 2021) and how the uniqueness of the resource, when appropriately managed, is also valuable, not easily

imitated, and supports a competitive advantage when adequately exploited (Barney & Clark, 2007, p. 70).

Table 2

Frequency of First-and Second Order Conceptual Themes

First-order themes	Frequency	Second-order conceptual themes	Frequency
Use the owner's successful business experience to influence the business structure, cuisine, and employee management.	36	Owner Commitment	24
Set clear expectations with employees for more consistent performance and outcomes.	27	Manage Talent	18
Build upon employee competencies to improve firm performance.	19	Manage Talent	13
Know the needed KSAs for the restaurant's success.	16	Select Talent	16
Know the needed personality/attitude from employees to support company culture.	16	Select Talent	16

Theme 1: Use the Owner's Prior Successful Business Experience

Using the owner's prior successful business experience to influence the business structure, cuisine, and employee management confirms Jogaratnam's (2018) study that education and experience positively affected performance. Putra and Cho's (2019) study of the characteristics of small business owners found that experience enabled an owner to understand the nature of the work better and lead with more confidence, whereas education was not significant in success. However, two participants have formal chef training and employ the typical master-apprentice experiential learning prevalent in the restaurant industry. These experiences made non-institutional education instrumental in the participants' current success. Their prior experience provided knowledge, skills, and

confidence in their abilities, making it easier to make decisions and adjust their business methods, even in the most challenging situations.

The participants responses varied regarding how they've utilized their experience, but all expressed specific values, beliefs, and expertise from their past experiences. For example, P1, who has been in the restaurant business since he was a teenager at his family-owned restaurant, shared the following.

Over the years, I've learned right from wrong, which is the number one question you must ask as a restaurateur, do you know right from wrong? Are you looking at your service? Are you looking at your food? Are you tasting your food every day? As my dad said, how can a restaurant not have great food if the owner is there tasting the food?

His father influenced his experience in the restaurant industry and instilled several principles in him. He expects his staff to follow the same principles because they worked for his family restaurant. For example, I observed a customer send a dish back to the kitchen because of the taste they attributed to the onions in the dish. When the staff alerted P1, he entered the kitchen and asked no one in particular, "Did you taste it?" When everyone answered no, he retrieved and tasted the dish to validate the customer's feedback. The customer stated that it had onions in it. The recipe did not include onions, nor did the dish contain onions. The owner never asked why the staff failed to meet his expectations. He just reinforced his expectations to taste any dish returned by a customer and left the kitchen.

While the owner's approach of reiterating expectations may be appropriate for a newer chef, this chef had experience and tenure within the owner's organization from a previous restaurant. The owner stated several times, both in the interview and during observations, how highly he thinks of the chef's ability to prepare new and existing recipes. The chef made an informed leadership decision to dispose of the dish without tasting or having any staff taste it because he prepared it and knew it did not include onions. The chef's reaction to the situation may have contradicted the owner's expectations, but it saved time and leveraged the chef's knowledge and experience. This observed behavior supports the research studies that found IRO success relies on knowledge transfer (Ahmed et al., 2020). In this case, the knowledge transferred from the chef to the employees and, at some point, to the owner (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). The owner's reaction could undermine the chef's authority in the kitchen in the future, or the chef may follow the owner's expectations. Either way, both used their industry experience, and the employees who witnessed the exchange had an opportunity to learn from the experience.

While two participants applied their restaurant industry knowledge to achieve success, one participant leveraged his success from another industry. P2 demonstrated how he used his prior business experience in his restaurant when explaining how he started his first restaurant while working as a chef in a corporate-owned kitchen,

[...] the first commercial property that I had purchased, I didn't really know what to do with it, so I said, "Well look, Imma gamble on myself." I know a little bit about the business side, so I just tried it, and that was it---no, looking back.

These statements supported Penrose's (1960) insights that management's use of resources was the only limitation that affected growth. When studying the perceived success factors of entrepreneurs, Hatthakijphong and Ting (2019) found business management, critical, and creative thinking skills to be the primary drivers of success. The effective use of resources allowed the IRO to expand his business from real estate owner and employee to restaurant owner and employer using his foundational business skills and critical and creative thinking.

Second-Order Theme: Owner Commitment

The second-order conceptual theme is owner commitment. This conceptual theme relates to the owner's use of experiential knowledge and persistence to successfully navigate the risks caused by the rapid and constantly changing external environment during the pandemic. In their study of small business owner resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Dias et al. (2022) found that resilience is born from experience and risk-taking. During the discussions with participants, all referred to the pandemic and the changes in labor availability, increased prices, and navigating an unstable economic environment; however, the focus on the pandemic and economy diminished as the interviews continued, and the participants focused on their adjusted operations that became the norm, even as they recognized that the external environment continued to change. Lee et al. (2022) found that normalizing change positively affects employees' well-being, but also owners' well-being and ability to pivot as needed.

The owners reconciled themselves to working with what they must and facing situations as they arise to keep their doors open and remain solvent. They all agreed that

operating a restaurant is tough, but not being in the restaurant business would be more difficult for them. If small business owners maintain their resilience in the face of adversity, the organization maintains resilience, leading to survival even in times of uncertainty (Hadjielias et al., 2022). Unlike large corporations and franchises, independent restaurants rely on the owner's reputation and resources for success. The participants in this study either funded their business or partnered with someone who trusted them to manage the restaurant successfully. Their ability to overcome adversity and operate effectively in times of stress required much more than that of a corporate-owned or franchised restaurant manager. P3 offered the following insight into how to remain resilient in times of uncertainty and stress brought on by the forces in the external environment,

You just have to be able to evolve, and pivot and move and understand that [...] nothing is consistent. [...] you have to be able to pivot and react to that stuff in a way [...] that provides you as close to what you want to get [...].

In contrast, P2 shared less about how he remains resilient from external environmental forces, and more about what was in his span of control in the restaurant's environment. P2's outlook focuses on how he manages his employees to get the best from them, "Switching my management style or seeing that this key thing works or is not working." Both participants' comments reflect the need for situational awareness when finding and using the right KSAs within the business to get the desired results.

When seen through the resource-based and knowledge-based view theories, the owners were committed to remaining in business by being competitive, leveraging their

knowledge, transferring it to staff, receiving knowledge from them, and effectively managing all resources. These findings supported Zahra's (2021) conclusions that the effective deployment of resources includes the practical and deliberate application of all organizational resources, both tangible and intangible, for growth and survival.

Consistent with all the participants, they stayed the course through a pandemic when closing the business could have been easier. They also transferred their knowledge to staff by setting clear expectations based on their prior experience.

Theme 2: Set Clear Expectations for Consistent Performance and Outcomes

The next first-order theme focused on statements and observations about setting clear employee expectations for more consistent performance and outcomes. The employee's need for clarity when performing duties begins with onboarding into the organization (Scott et al., 2022). The need to set expectations diminishes as the employee remains with the organization and learns routines and culture. The employee's diminished need benefits the owner, like in the case of P2, where his tenured employee completed routine tasks efficiently without any intervention. The tenured employee's independent efficiency allowed P2 to work closely with a less experienced staff member to transfer needed KSAs. With tenured, experienced employees, the owner's ability to manage external and personal pressures and provide clarity through active engagement with employees who may need it becomes easier (Jumelet et al., 2022). If owners or managers cannot set expectations by sharing KSAs with staff, they run the risk of the business operating below optimal levels because of the gaps in knowledge.

All the participants shared the importance of their staff knowing what they expect, the culture they have built, and the proper execution required to maintain their reputation and that of the restaurant. Instilling this in every employee takes time, persistence, and patience. Like other small business owners, offering clarity to employees about strategies and procedures is demanding and challenging, albeit necessary to sustain the business (Jumelet et al., 2022). The participants provided examples of how they set expectations. P3 stated, “[...] it is one of the first things I ever say to anybody when I interviewed them [...] we have probably five or six all hands-on deck days a year. And you should expect to work every holiday [...]” By stating this at the beginning of employment, the owner can continue to point back to this when the employee wants to take time off or calls out. Setting this expectation helps to manage the employee’s expectations. If the employee fails to meet expectations, the owner can act accordingly without guilt.

Setting expectations with managers shifted the discussion from task-based to leader-based, ensuring the manager acted as the owner in different situations. P3 stated the following when setting expectations with chefs and managers. “And you just need to have that discussion so that they understand what’s important to you [...] that they’re able to replicate the flavor and the culture that you want to build.” Empowering a manager to be a leader raises the expectation of ownership and accountability in the business outcomes.

Regarding expectations on processes, the participants shared during interviews and observations that employees understanding how things ‘are done’ is essential to the restaurant owners’ success. P2 shared about new employees coming into the organization

and learning their methods and process, “[...] when you’ve got somebody that’s learning your way [...] I don’t want to say brainwashed but like just understanding your standard [...].” Knowing and understanding expectations allows the employee to perform their duties and builds trust between the manager and the employee more effectively. As trust grows between owners and staff, owners are likelier to share their power by delegating oversight and tasks that they usually perform to their more trusted staff members. The ability to share power positively affects innovation and employee performance (Castañeda García et al., 2023). A lack of shared power increases the owner’s need to oversee all aspects of the business more closely. It decreases the management and staff’s willingness to take risks and share in the ownership of positive business outcomes.

Second-Order Theme: Manage Talent

In over half of the responses that generated clear expectations, the theme coalesced as a second-order conceptual theme of how the owner managed talent within the organization. This finding supported Burvill et al.’s (2018) assertion that a firm’s owner and leaders must plan how to manage resources to achieve a competitive advantage. As the restaurant industry recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, research grew on effectively managing human and social capital to build resilience postcrisis and achieve a competitive advantage (Al-Omouh et al., 2020; Chowdhury et al., 2020). The participants shared how they used established processes and social capital to manage change and maintain operations. Though the participants varied in their approach to managing staff, the single consistent behavior was the owner’s willingness to trust and give more control to employees with demonstrated experience or with whom they have

established a relationship over time. Ogunmokun et al. (2020) found a positive, meaningful relationship between employee trust in managers, the employees' willingness to share knowledge, and innovative performance.

The participants repeatedly commented about long-standing employees or those with specific skills and autonomy within the organization. For instance, when referring to how he integrated his general manager into operations, P1 shared his realization that for the GM to do what he hired him to do, he had to adjust his management style. He said, "You know it must be a win-win for everybody. So, you know, sometimes, I allow him to do things that I don't particularly agree with." During observation, P1 demonstrated this behavior. He stayed visible in the dining room but unobtrusive. He did not interfere with the direction or oversight of the GM. He focused on areas the GM was not and made himself available if the GM wanted to confer. In the kitchen, where he expressed more experience and personal comfort from his years of experience, P1 engaged more with the employees, tasted dishes, discussed ideas for new menu items, watched preparations, and handed off dishes to servers. The owner/employee interactions were natural and well-established. The established trust and relationships promoted open communication, knowledge sharing, and innovation organically (Chowdhury et al., 2020); and sustainable organizational culture that positively impacts the owner's ability to retain employees (DiPietro & Levitt, 2019). When describing his experience with managing the staff in his restaurants, P2 shared,

I haven't really run into too many bumps in the road because for the most part when you're dealing with food and dealing with people waitresses and cooks and

all that... There's like a process, so like, here's the prep sheet. Here's what we need. [...] It's more of a checklist--checks and balances kind of thing.

P2 leveraged the prep sheets and believed they contributed to a smoothly run operation when employees followed them. During the observation, P2 was in the kitchen preparing for a catering event and interacted with two staff members. One staff member used a prep sheet; the other did not use a prep sheet, only an inventory list. The first staff member not using a prep sheet had been with the owner for 3 to 4 years and was responsible for preparing and bottling cold press juices for sale at his restaurants for most of that time. The second staff member was an assistant cook whose most recent position was that of a utility worker visibly posted and followed a prep sheet for an upcoming catering order.

Though all three worked within feet of each other, other than pleasantries, P2 never questioned or intervened with the first worker throughout the completion of the prep and bottling. At the same time, P2 engaged with the assistant cook differently. He questioned him as if quizzing him on the amounts and ingredients for items on the prep sheet and for substitutions and adjustments based on dietary needs. At least two times, P2 walked away from the prep kitchen to answer a private phone call. In P2's absence, the assistant seamlessly maintained all the prep in progress. These interactions correlate with what P2 shared during our interview "All of the cooks that worked for me started as dishwashers... All of them. So, I pretty much trained them all." He trained them and then found their proper position within his restaurants. This approach to managing talent supports the findings from Cho et al. (2021) and Jogaratnam (2017a) that an organization

that utilizes the collective KSA resources of competent individuals has a better chance of gaining a competitive advantage. This strategy required effective talent management practices to identify people with needed KSAs and place them in the right roles to affect business performance positively.

Managing staff in ways that motivate them by providing the necessary information to perform their roles autonomously reduces the need for the manager to be everywhere. The owners' actions in setting expectations when managing talent through demonstrating trust, providing training, and building social capital confirmed Berraies et al.'s (2021) findings that environments, where leaders distribute authority increase trust and knowledge, providing business continuity. In the example of P2, because one employee understood expectations and had completed the task for years, it enabled the owner to work more closely with the employee who needed more oversight and training. The investment in the employee now means that he will one day be able to operate autonomously, freeing the owner to concentrate on other business demands.

Theme 3: Build Upon Employee Competencies

Employees bring KSAs from their education and experiences into any role. However, depending on their experience within the specific industry or job, their level of competence may be lower or higher than the position demands. In that case, it is up to the owner or, if delegated, a manager or employee to assess how competent the employee is at the job. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, skilled workers have left the restaurant industry (Bufquin et al., 2021), leading to a shortage of skilled workers as the economy reopens. This change has made it necessary for the participants in this study to be more

willing to train unskilled workers and learn how to apply prior skills to the restaurant industry. After that, the owner decided how to build upon the existing KSAs to improve their job fit within their restaurant.

All participants expressed how they leveraged their employees' KSAs, whether through their ideation of menus, processes, or equipment that benefit the restaurant, how they engage with customers, or how they engage with fellow staff members and management. Some of the employees have prior restaurant experience, and others do not. Because of the variety of experiences, restaurant types, and participants' focus, how the owners leveraged the employees existing KSAs and built their KSAs differs. However, all participants first referred to why they hired the employee or what they saw in the employee before discussing what they could do better. For example, P1 shared that most of his kitchen staff worked at one of his other restaurants, so he knew their capabilities and that their KSAs would benefit his restaurant. P2 also leveraged existing staff for open cook positions versus hiring externally and explained his reasons for doing so this way,

Like the dishwasher, they see all the food going out. They see all of this organized chaos. They see all of that stuff. So, it's easy for them to transition into that role.

But that's why I definitely am okay with hiring from within when it comes to stuff like that. Just less for them to unlearn.

P2's example demonstrated that prior KSAs might not make them an obvious fit for a job. However, the KSAs may have provided the proper foundation. When the KSAs include the capacity and willingness to learn, owners' investment in those resources can lead to positive firm performance (Simic et al., 2020). While the foundational KSAs are

evident, all the participants described ways they developed those skills to align with their specific restaurant. P3, whose responses in this theme centered on supporting the employee's growth from the perspective of knowing what was important to the employee, helping them feel special, and expressing confidence that caring for these core elements will give the employee space "to figure the rest out." P3 summed up his thought: "So there's different kinds of people, and you'd have to recognize who's who and what they want from the equation."

The participants varied in their approach to leveraging employees' existing knowledge and continuing to build the employee's competence. The one link that connected all the participants was the time spent collaborating, explaining, and demonstrating. This master-apprentice approach is prevalent within the restaurant industry, where learning occurs tacitly from the chef or, in this case, the owner to their staff throughout service (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). Owners and their delegates invested time assessing a new employee's competence and continued the assessment as processes change. Over that time, the employees repeat tasks and become more comfortable with assigned tasks, building muscle memory to successfully perform the needed tasks within the restaurant (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). When sharing how he approached his less-experienced staff's development, P2 stated,

Just showing them different processes and how to set up. If you're doing like even like something like sandwiches. You don't just build a sandwich because we do a lot of catering too. [You should] set up ten wraps instead of two or one. Build all the wraps, then wrap them like build the process [steps] for them to follow.

Wellton and Lainpelto (2021) found that the building of knowledge in restaurants occurs in three phases, (a) knowledge production found at the entry level, (b) knowledge accumulation that takes the entry-level knowledge and expounds on it through additional schooling or mentoring and reflecting on the work in teams, and (c) knowledge distribution where experienced managers share knowledge through delegation and use of documents or other available “artifacts.” While artifacts may be far less typical in the participant’s restaurants, knowledge distribution still occurred within these organizations.

In place of artifacts was the master-apprentice relationship between the owner and employees and between more experienced and less experienced employees. P1 shared, “I’m not in the kitchen as much. I’m not watching every dish come out of the kitchen like I used to. So, I’m trying to develop everybody.” Delegating the management and development of staff-distributed knowledge. It expanded the capabilities of both the manager and the employees as they learn different techniques and skills that the owner may not possess. For example, P1 shared during his interview that he had hired a front-of-the-house manager from a well-known fine dining establishment, and he turned over all front-of-the-house management to him because he worked for a famous chef “for 18 years.”

During the observation, the owner stood back and oversaw the actions of the servers and the bartenders in the dining room and bar. During service, the manager consulted with the owner pointing out errors in the newer servers’ fine dining service techniques. When asking the owner about it, he stated, “He said that they’re serving from the wrong side, pouring too much champagne in the glass to keep it cold.” To that, he

added, “I didn’t know about how much to pour either.” In response to the critiques, the owner agreed with the manager that he, the manager, would provide more training reinforcing the master-apprentice approach to training in a restaurant.

Second-Order Theme: Manage Talent

The intentionality of the time spent with employees, promoting from within, and retaining employees means that participants have built relationships or social capital with their employees and have been a part of their employees’ growth through the three phases of knowledge building. Recently, researchers found that knowledge transfer has the most impact on organizational capital; and when managers work side by side with their employees over time, the organization’s social capital builds, and that connection positively impacts knowledge transfer (Dahiyat et al., 2023). All the participants mentioned the longevity of their staff or having helped develop the staff within the restaurant. Investing in staff through well-rounded talent practices allows employees to function more effectively and reduce turnover (Jibril & Yeşiltaş, 2022). P1 demonstrated this when he shared his symbiotic relationship with his chef, who “doesn’t speak English well” but intuitively knows how to take recipes he finds and work with him to adjust and get the desired outcome. This symbiotic relationship results from working together for more than 5 years at two restaurants. P2 developed his cooks from his utility staff, and P3 shared about the focused attention and time he spends with his managers ensuring they understand the restaurant culture and his focus on understanding what is important to them.

Infusing the combination of the master–apprentice methods, building, and maintaining social capital, and connecting with managers and staff into the daily operations, the participants made development the “norm” and allow making any changes needed to improve operational performance an expected part of operations. The normalization of change required owners to know the skills needed to enable operational efficiency and quick pivots.

Theme Four: Know the Needed KSAs for Success

Knowing the KSAs needed for success coalesced into three areas that included the second-order theme: selecting employees with the right KSAs, and for both employees and owners, effectively using existing KSAs and building additional KSAs within the organization. The participants’ responses demonstrated what other researchers reported regarding restaurant owners’ success is determined by customer satisfaction which leads to returning customers (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020; DiPietro & Levitt, 2019) and better profit margins. Owners presented their experiences from the viewpoint of how they selected and worked with managers differently than how they selected and managed front-line staff positions. However, they clarified that managers and front-line employees impact customer satisfaction and require certain KSAs.

When selecting managers, the most described KSAs by participants included mutual respect, trustworthiness, organization, the ability to be a role model, and experience. Recent literature regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, of which these participants have remained operational throughout, reported that managers needed to work alongside their employees and set an example of the work needed (Elshaer, 2022).

It makes sense that the managers thought of most highly by owners would have those characteristics because they all work alongside their employees and have had a strong hand in training them. During the observation of P1, he remained engaged in the kitchen, tasting completed menu items, cleaning plates, and validating the actions of the chefs. He then shifted to the dining room, bussed tables, and collaborated with the general manager on serving but allowed the general manager to manage the staff directly. The general manager demonstrated a similar approach in how he engaged with the staff and spent a good deal of time engaging with the owner on how the staff performed and the performance gaps. Attention to employee performance by the manager and owner is imperative to selecting the necessary talent to fill gaps and identify needed training.

When selecting employees, the participants focused on attitude, ability to learn, prior experience, and training within the industry. The owners identified a potential employee's prior experience and training by checking references and interviewing the candidate. Owners had to rely on their prior experience and intuition to determine a candidate's attitude and ability to learn during a short interview. A person's intuition is based on more than just emotions but on the owner's recalling past experiences and combining it with a rational analysis (Deters, 2023) of what they observe from the employees; the employees shared background and answers to pointed questions. The participants all approached how they used it to select talent differently. For example, P3 reported that he brought interviewees back for multiple interviews at contrasting times of the day to better understand how they engaged based on the time of day. This approach to observation and engagement identified whether the person could work in the required late

hours and remain coherent and functioning. It also provided more time to observe the candidate, penetrate inauthentic personalities and get to know a potential employee. P1 and P2 made quicker selections based on their schedule and confidence in their intuition. They then worked alongside the employee and observed them to ensure the employee could do the job.

Choosing employees that benefit the restaurant required knowing how to put people together with KSAs that complement one another. It is unlikely to find one person with all the necessary skills. However, an owner could achieve more positive organizational outcomes by putting employees into pairs, teams, or groups and encouraging knowledge sharing and social capital building (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Neffke, 2019). In all three restaurants, the participants asserted how one person did one thing or another well and how someone else did something else well. For example, P1 stated that his bartender, “Everyone loves him,” is good with people and knows how to upsell. When the second bartender quit, they called in someone who did not know the POS, but she came in and worked through the open shifts. An employee’s reliability can make an owner more likely to select and retain the employee even when they lack experience or other contrary characteristics. As P1 admitted, “She doesn’t have the look that fits [fine dining], but she’s a trooper.” P1 paired the well-liked experienced bartender with a new bartender who was ready and willing to work even without training. The combined KSAs allowed the restaurant to function.

The owners paired people with complementary skills and effectively used existing staff skills by pairing inexperienced employees with experienced employees, which

supports knowledge and culture transfer. P2 worked closely with inexperienced staff so that they learnt the culture and skills that he wanted to see in his restaurants. Then, it is as if he is always in his restaurant. P2 also paid attention to existing staff's interests and gaps in knowledge. He sought driven people who wanted to improve their lives like he did when he started. When they showed an interest in the business, he empowered them to participate in the success. For example, he commented during the interview,

I encourage them to help me build the business. The more money we earn, the more money there's out there in the budget for raises, the more money that's out there for new equipment and all of those things that you guys see on TV and want this, smart kitchen and, state of the art kitchen I mean, it got to come from somewhere the budget gotta be made.

Most importantly, he is clear about the areas of opportunity, like food waste. Using this specific example, he focused employees' attention on limiting waste. The more people focus on reducing waste, the more likely they will reach the desired outcomes. Owners trained employees in the required techniques and procedures to meet the outcomes. Part of determining the employee's ability to do the job was whether training would get the employee to the desired level of performance.

Establishing baseline KSAs allowed for more structured training programs to bring all employees and managers to the expected level of performance. The ability to effectively analyze gaps in skills and then identify the right person or process to fill the gap leads to a successful business. Both P1 and P2 emphasized the benefit of choosing staff members in the kitchens that have received basic training at a corporate or franchise-

owned establishment for rigor in training on safe food handling. P1 asserted, “Get somebody that worked for a large restaurant group that trains well. [...] you know you have this foundation where you can train from there [...]” P2 reported, “Food safety training is pretty much the same everywhere.” Owners enacted this approach for both kitchen workers and servers. For a small business owner, having a new employee that received the more rigorous training requirements of better-funded organizations benefits their organization. Staff were able to be productive sooner, reducing the investment of time and money for training. This methodology did not preclude all owners from retraining staff where they had specific preferences. For P1, his general manager had higher expectations for a fine dining establishment which drove the need for more training in his establishment and a higher level of expectations for hiring staff. The higher expectations for new employees inhibited them from filling all required roles in the dining room and bars. During the observation, the general manager mentioned the need for training. For an IRO to have employees meet their expectations, they must establish a more formal training plan for new employees or, when establishing new expectations, make the expected outcomes part of their employee evaluation. The participants evaluated not only experience and KSAs but also the potential and existing employees’ personalities and attitudes to ensure a fit within the culture.

Theme 5: Know the Needed Personality/Attitudes for Culture

The fifth theme coalesced from the owners’ descriptions of choosing employees with certain personality traits and attitudes that fit within the desired culture. Unlike the other first-order themes, there was an equal number of inferences to the second-order

theme of selecting talent. The owner's talent selection responses focused on external hires, internal promotions, and job changes within work teams. The participants' integrated approach to talent selection considering personality and attitudes correlates to the person-organization fit model, which can influence an employee's engagement, job satisfaction, performance, and the likelihood of remaining with the organization (Dawson et al., 2023; Giffen et al., 2023; Prasetyaningrum & Hendarsjah, 2022). While the participants sought and seemed to value food industry experience, the overwhelming responses when choosing talent had more to do with how they showed up during interviews, if an existing employee approached problem-solving, or how they worked within the team.

Being concerned about whether the person will be able to do the job versus their being able to learn how to do the job their way concerned the owners more. For example, P1 asserted that "it's about trying to find people who are committed and willing to work" and "I look for personality, talent and then if I'm able to work with them." P1 was not alone in this assertion. P2 looked for people "who don't have a lot of experience," which reduces the need to retrain old habits that do not fit within the organizational culture. P3 focused most on how people present themselves for the interview. For example, restaurant roles are often busy, requiring employees that can keep up with the pace. So, he looks to see if people come and seem "active," energetic, well put together, and present themselves consistently "during different times of the day" that may be busy in the restaurant business. The participants' knowledge and evaluation of existing employees who performed at desired levels allowed them to identify new employees with

complementary KSAs, personalities, and attitudes for their organization. The owner perpetuates the desired culture by combining resources into complementary work groups that exemplify the desired behaviors and attitudes.

Culture develops over time, and leaders reinforce it through leadership behaviors and social interactions within the organization. The transference of knowledge was another way owners reinforced the organization's culture. Trequattrini et al. (2019) found that knowledge distribution expands knowledge within the organization through mentorship. The mentors share the culture through their interactions with mentees. When the owner takes on the mentor role, they have more opportunities to demonstrate the desired culture throughout the organization. This study's participants demonstrated mentorship in their descriptions of their interactions with their employees and during observations. The behaviors they stated they did not want to see in their employees, they sometimes exhibited during the observation. For example, P1 referenced the importance of a quiet and calm kitchen and reported that "there was no yelling" in the kitchen. However, he did raise his voice and take a more aggressive stance toward his kitchen staff when he felt they failed to follow his directions. P2 admitted that he sometimes would "grip the chef's coat" in the kitchen, but it is rare because that is not the culture he wants in his restaurants.

Sometimes, the participants found that they had to remind their staff of the type of culture expected and demonstrate it. Owners and leaders set the tone for motivation by directing, mobilizing, and influencing their staff (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). For example, during P3's observation, he needed to assert his authority and expectations about how

managers treat staff and support organizational changes. This difference of opinion focused on a new, Black woman chef hired by the owner who focused on soul food. The manager felt the new chef needed to gain experience and provide the type of food customers wanted. P3 reminded the manager that the chef just started, she needed their support, and the types of menu items were what, as one of the owners, he expected to see the restaurant start to serve.

This firm response from the owner initiated a 10-minute monologue from the manager about several issues that made it impossible for him to do his job. P3 listened and asked questions to get to the root cause, but in the end, it was evident that the manager needed to vent his overall frustration about the impending change. Afterward, he shared that he often feels he may let his employees complain too much before stopping it, but he does not want to “shut anyone down.” His approach to this conversation aligns with his earlier sentiments about creating a vision for his employees, knowing what they want, and then they will “figure out the rest.” The manager’s discomfort with a change in the organization may indicate a need for more collaboration on innovation. When employees feel disconnected from the decision-making process, they often fight against the change, desiring to return to the status quo. As shown in the participants’ responses and resulting themes, owners and employees have a role to play in the success of a restaurant. However, they are not the only ones who impact a restaurant’s success. Restaurant patrons who experience the restaurant through its environment, staff and food and rate and comment on their experience online impact other customer’s patronage based on their comments. For a study on organizational KSAs impact on restaurant

survival, customer's sentiments on their experience had to be considered as a data triangulation point.

Implications of Consumer Sentiment

Many researchers identified the importance of UGC on a restaurant's survival (Chakraborty et al., 2022; English & Fleischmann, 2019; Kobez, 2018; J. Lee & Kim, 2020; Lepkowska-White et al., 2019; Li et al., 2023; Litvin et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2020; Maslowska, Malthouse, & Viswanathan, 2017; Tiago et al., 2017). The UGC platform used to triangulate the data as an archival record source for this study was Yelp. To ensure the most recent and relevant data, the Yelp reviews used were from a 4-month period, resulting in 21 reviewers and 36 reviews, as shown in Table 3. Of note is the difference in the number of comments as compared to reviewers' cross cases. P2 achieved 5% more comments than reviewers due to returning customers and comments. P2 is the only one who actively replies to reviewer comments, showing appreciation for their patronage or apologizing for any negative experiences. Shen et al. (2022) found that when owners respond to comments about situations they can control, there is a more positive impact on the commenting customer and future customer return intentions than if they comment on things that are out of their control. As indicated by P2, reviewers will continue to comment and rate the restaurant when they see their reviews are taken seriously which is indicated by a response from the owner or manager.

Table 3*Yelp Ratings, Reviewers, and Comments by Participant*

Participant	# of Reviewers	# of Comments	Rating
P1	10	10	3.5
P2	8	23	4.5
P3	3	3	4.0
Total	21	36	

More recent research applying machine learning techniques to Yelp reviews reinforced prior research that UGC impacts restaurant survival (Li et al., 2023). The researchers focused on three areas of customer feedback: menu, environment, and price. The literature review for this study on the impact of KSAs on restaurant survival included the three additional areas of overall customer satisfaction, return intentions, and staff appeal. These six categories were considered when categorizing the Yelp reviews. To categorize the Yelp reviews, I relied on customer experience sentiment of positive, negative, or not applicable described in Table 4.

Table 4*Yelp Review Sentiment Descriptions*

Sentiment	Description
Positive	A customer referred to a positive experience with either food, staff, price, environment, return intentions, or overall.
Negative	A customer referred to a negative experience with food, staff, price, environment, return intentions, or overall.
Not applicable (N/A)	A customer did not mention an experience with food, staff, price, environment, or return intentions.

Though a limited number of reviews were available, the customer comments about their experiences did show support and opposition to research from this study's literature review and more recent research. As listed in Table 5, the positive sentiment from reviewers was related to menu or food taste, with 26 out of 96 total expressing positive sentiments. The common sentiment for a negative rating was the environment and overall customer satisfaction, both of which had 8 out of 28 expressed sentiments. Liu and Tse (2018) found that price was a significant indicator of customer satisfaction. The price was the least commented on in the customer sentiment for these participants, with 25 N/A comments out of 85 where the reviewer did not share their thoughts or feelings about a sentiment category. Although researchers also reported that patrons of full-service restaurants expect premium service, atmosphere, menu items, and prices (Shahzadi et al., 2018), atmosphere and pricing were the least mentioned in these customers' sentiments. However, menu taste was important for a positive experience, and environment or atmosphere was important for a negative experience.

Table 5*Yelp Review Sentiments by Category*

Sentiment categories	Sentiment		
	Positive	Negative	Not applicable (N/A)
Customer Satisfaction	25	8	2
Return Intentions	14	2	19
Menu/Taste	26	2	7
Staff/Service	16	3	16
Environment	11	8	16
Price/Value	4	5	25
Total	96	28	85

Another finding indicated within customer experience sentiments is the lack of reference to staff or service in full-service restaurants. Prior research reported the importance of positive customer and staff interaction, which is important to this study because of the required KSAs. The results from these reviews could indicate the recent research that reported shifting customer expectations due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought on by inflation and a constantly changing environment (Ma et al., 2023). The customer's overall sentiment with menu/food taste being the principal factor in a positive experience means that the five themes of owner's prior knowledge, setting expectations, leveraging employee knowledge and skills, knowing the needed knowledge and skills, and culture fit is applicable and important to a restaurant serving menu items that create a positive experience.

Applications to Professional Practice

This study explored how independent restaurant owners use organizational KSAs to remain in business beyond 5 years. The findings may provide IROs with practical approaches to selecting, managing, and retaining organizational KSAs identified within the major themes. The five major themes included: (a) use the owner's prior success; (b) set clear expectations; (c) build upon employee competence, (d) know the needed KSAs for success; (e) know the needed personality/attitude for the culture. Each theme correlated with the literature review and the study's conceptual framework of the resource-based view, which focused on the impact of effectively managing all organizational resources.

The five themes provide practical application to independent restaurant owners in several ways. Independent restaurant owners operate with smaller profit margins, and the recent labor shortages and inflation have impacted their operations. The owner's position is precarious, making them more vulnerable to failure than their better-funded counterparts (Elshaer, 2022). As owners apply prior success, whether their own or others, to the restaurant, they can reduce errors and recover more quickly when errors or environmental changes occur. The successful process, procedures, and structure allow the owner to set clear expectations for their staff, enabling the employees to know the required activities and performance levels for success. The employees within their organization learn from one another through mentorship and social interaction. The employees' ongoing engagement with one another perpetuates KSAs throughout the organization creating a more competent workforce. The increased competence clarifies

which KSAs new and existing employees need to achieve peak performance and positively influence profit margins. As the owner demonstrates the desired culture and holds managers and employees accountable for the expected behaviors, they can select new employees or workgroups reinforcing the culture.

When staff can perform their duties without the direct oversight or intervention of the owner, it allows owners to focus on navigating the external environments, learning the latest trends, efficiencies, and available opportunities to grow their business. Small business owners who effectively navigate external environments and update their management strategies to correspond and respond to environmental changes are more likely to continue to experience business longevity (Do et al., 2022). Employees learn resilience as business owners incorporate change as the norm within the organizational culture. They can continue to have positive performance as processes must change due to costs of goods or staffing shortages, and employees must take on more responsibility. How the owner responds to these changes impacts their staff and, in turn, their success.

One of the best responses to external and internal environmental changes is for the owner to know their staff proactively. By knowing their staff's KSAs and understanding what motivates them and what they are seeking, the owner can leverage them where they are most competent, pair and group employees in ways where one's strength balances another's weakness, and they can learn from one another. As the owner engages with staff, they can demonstrate the desired culture and correct counterculture behaviors and assumptions within the employee population. This form of participative and community of practice builds additional competencies within the workforce through

the social practice of being together to complete a task in real time with a tangible outcome (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the kitchen, it may be preparing menu items or behaving respectfully to one another. In the dining room, it may be taking a customer's order correctly or suggesting additional items to increase the check amount. At the bar, it may mean the bartender prepares a drink and serves the customer as expected. These tangible outcomes are what lead to successful operations.

Implications for Social Change

The successful application of this study's results could contribute to positive social change in many ways. Restaurant owners can lower greenhouse emissions and reduce food insecurity through their employees and operations. In 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported that U.S. food loss and waste is the equivalent of 170 million tons of carbon dioxide, which is equal to 42 coal-fired power plants (Buzzby, 2022). This does not include the tons of food decomposing in landfills. The world's population will require more than 150% of the food produced in 2010, but we currently waste about a third of the produced food (Jaglo et al., 2021). Restaurant owners have become more aware of reducing food waste for their bottom line and the planet (Filimonau et al., 2023; Huang & Hall, 2023). As the owners integrate this knowledge into their processes and daily operations, they share it with their workers, who apply it at the restaurant. However, they may also bring it to other establishments. The increased awareness and knowledge improve the ability of those within the restaurant industry to have a positive impact on reducing food waste.

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations for action focus on how IROs can establish and maintain a culture and structure that supports KSA sharing to mitigate the impact of high employee turnover and increased competition prevalent in the restaurant industry. Based on the findings from this study, actions IROs can take to sustain their businesses include:

- Network with other restaurant owners and knowledgeable industry insiders to stay current with trends and challenges to allow the application of internal interventions to mitigate external pressures.
- Engage with all employees to demonstrate the desired culture and get to know their strengths and weaknesses to deploy them more effectively within the restaurant.
- Establish a structure that encourages and supports knowledge sharing by assigning mentors based on existing KSAs and KSAs that need further development. Tie mentors' success to the mentee's success so that employee competency increases over time.
- Document recipes, processes, and procedures to retain organizational knowledge, clarify expectations, allow transference among existing staff, and minimize the time it takes for new employees to become productive.
- Identify and document complementary and missing KSAs and personality traits to seek when interviewing candidates for open positions.

Organizational KSAs apply to all businesses. How owners and managers ensure shared knowledge among employees positively affects worker satisfaction, performance,

and profitability (Rezaei et al., 2022). I shared the findings with the research participants. The findings provide actions for other small business owners who seek ways to sustain their businesses. I intend to share the results among organizational events, conferences, and further expansion of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to complete an in-depth exploration of how organizational KSAs positively impact a small business IROs ability to survive beyond 5 years. The small sample size offered detailed engagement and feedback. However, a larger sample size could provide more significant insights and relevant actions. The hectic pace and long hours within the restaurant industry limited the ability to spend time on interviews, and the size and fast pace of the kitchens also limited the observation time. The ability to spend more time during the interview and the observations could positively add to the research findings. Alternatively, conducting a quantitative survey based on these findings in person could expedite data capture and reduce the needed time for participants. The participants shared documentation but did not allow the collection of it by the researcher. The ability to review the documentation post interview and observation may increase the benefits of research triangulation. Because all owners must manage and retain organizational KSAs, insights beyond the restaurant industry could provide beneficial findings. Organizational KSAs impact not only the owner but also the employees. Further research involving employees and owners may add to this body of research.

Reflections

My doctoral journey has been rife with moments of anxiety, enlightenment, and pleasure at uncovering information and engaging with other scholars. The comradery between fellow scholars and my chair helped me see the study through to the finish line. As a small business owner, human resources professional and former restaurateur in training, I recognized my bias in what I heard and saw. From what I learned through my studies, I knew to take that awareness and step back to objectivity and report what I saw and heard from the participants before making a conclusion.

I look forward to taking this experience and building upon it to continue investigating how KSAs can help a small business flourish and sustain even through tough economic times.

Conclusion

Independent restaurant owners operate with slim profit margins requiring them to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible to earn revenue. Intangible resources such as knowledge directly impact the effective and efficient use of tangible resources. The owners' and their employees' prior experiences provide a treasure trove of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Owners can empower the use of the KSAs for the benefit of their business by getting to know the expertise inherent in their staff, building a culture of knowledge sharing, putting a structure in place to support knowledge sharing, and documenting the knowledge. Hence, the organization retains the knowledge even when they do not retain the employee. The findings within this study provide a place for

restaurant owners to take advantage of some of their most valuable resources, their knowledge, skills, and abilities and those of their employees.

References

- Abdullah, F., Ingram, A., & Welsh, R. (2009). Managers' perceptions of tacit knowledge in Edinburgh's Indian restaurants. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 21(1), 118–127.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110910930223>
- Abutabenjeh, S., & Jaradat, R. (2018). Clarification of research design, research methods, and research methodology: A guide for public administration researchers and practitioners. *Teaching Public Administration*, 36(3), 237–258.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0144739418775787>
- Adeinat, I. (2019). Measuring service quality efficiency using DINSERV. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 13(3), 591–604.
<https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR13.03-06>
- Ahmad, Z., Chao, L., Chao, W., & Ilya, S. (2020). How collaboration impacts in the market orientation–performance relationship of SMEs? A perspective from belt and road initiative. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-12-2019-0518>
- Ahmed, T., Khan, M. S., Duangkamol, T., Siraphatthada, Y., & Phumdara, T. (2020). Impact of employees' engagement and knowledge sharing on organizational performance: Study of HR challenges in COVID-19 pandemic. *Human Systems Management*, 39, 589–601. <https://10.3233/HSM-201052>
- Alam, M. K. (2021). A systematic qualitative case study: Questions, data collection, NVivo analysis and saturation. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and*

Management: An International Journal, 16(1), 1–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-09-2019-1825>

Alberca, P., & Parte, L. (2018). Operational efficiency evaluation of restaurant firms.

International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 30(3), 1959–

1977. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2016-0547>

Ali, F., Harris, K. J., & Ryu, K. (2019). Consumers' return intentions toward a restaurant

with foodborne illness outbreaks: Differences across restaurant type and

consumers' dining frequency. *Food Control*, 98, 424–430.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2018.12.001>

Allegretto, S., & Reich, M. (2018). Are local minimum wages absorbed by price

increases? Estimates from internet-based restaurant menus. *ILR Review*, 71(1),

35–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793917713735>

Al-Omouh, K. S., Simon-Moya, V., & Sendra-Garcia, J. (2020). The impact of social

capital and collaborative knowledge creation on e-business proactiveness and

organizational agility in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. *Journal of*

Innovation and Knowledge, 5(4), 279–288.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2020.10.002>.

Alvarez, S. A., Zander, U., Barney, J. B., & Afuah, A. (2020). Developing a theory of the

firm for the 21st Century. *Academy of Management Review*, 45(4), 711–716.

<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2020.0372>

Amankwah-Amoah, J. (2018). Human capital flows in failing organizations: An

integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 19(4), 732–746.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JIC-05-2017-0065>

Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *19*(1), 1–9.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>

Anabo, I. F., Elexpuru–Albizuri, I., & Villardón–Gallego, L. (2019). Revisiting the Belmont Report’s ethical principles in internet–mediated research: perspectives from disciplinary associations in the social sciences. *Ethics Information Technology*, *21*, 137–149.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-018-9495-z>

Anderson, V. (2017). Criteria for evaluating qualitative research. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *2*(28), 125–133.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21282>

Arsel, Z. (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: A tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *44*(4), 939–948.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx096>

Assaker, G., Hallak, R., & O’Connor, P. (2020). Examining heterogeneity through response–based unit segmentation in PLS–SEM: A study of human capital and firm performance in upscale restaurants. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *23*(2).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1490253>

Assensoh–Kodua, A. (2019). The resource-based view: A tool of key competency for competitive advantage. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *17*(3), 143–

152. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.17\(3\).2019.12](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.17(3).2019.12)

Ayres, L., Kavanaugh, K., & Knafl, K. A. (2003). Within-case and across-case

- approaches to qualitative data analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(6), 871–883. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732303013006008>
- Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: Deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(4), 383–400. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-18-00035>
- Ballesteros–Rodríguez, J. L., Hernández–López, L., Álamo–Vera, F. R., & De Saá–Pérez, P. (2020). Training success in restaurants: The trainer’s effort to articulate knowledge. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*. Advance online publication, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2020.1769517>
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120.
- Barney, J. B. (2001). resource-based theories of competitive advantage: A ten-year retrospective on the resource-based view. *Journal of Management*, 27, 643–650. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630102700602>
- Barney, J. B., & Clark, D. N. (2007). *Resource-based theory: Creating and sustaining a competitive advantage*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Barney, J. B., Ketchen, D. J., & Wright, M. (2011). The future of resource-based theory: Revitalization or decline? *Journal of Management*, 37(5), 1299–1315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310391805>
- Barratt, M., Choi, T. Y., & Li, M. (2011). Qualitative case studies in operations management: Trends, research outcomes, and future research implications.

Journal of Operations Management, 29(4), 329–342.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2010.06.002>

Barrett, A., Kajamaa, A., & Johnston, J. (2020). How to be reflexive when conducting qualitative research. *Clinical Teacher*, 17(1), 9–12.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/tct.13133>

Barrows, C., Vieira, E. T., & Dipietro, R. B. (2016). Increasing the effectiveness of benchmarking in the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Process Management and Benchmarking*, 6, 79–111.

<https://doi.org/10.1504/ijpmb.2016.073327>

Bartsch, S. M., Asti, L., Nyathi, S., Spiker, M. L., & Lee, B. Y. (2018). Estimated cost to a restaurant of a foodborne illness outbreak. *Public Health Reports*, 133(3), 274–

286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033354917751129>

Baumann, C., Cherry, M., & Chu, W. (2019). Competitive productivity (CP) at macro–meso–micro levels. *Cross Cultural and Strategic Management*, 26(2), Article

1180144. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCSM-08-2018-0118>

Becker, G. (2002). The age of human capital. In E. P. Lazear (Ed.), *Education in the twenty-first century* (pp. 3–8). The Hoover Institution Press.

Becker, G. S. (1962). Investment in human capital: A theoretical analysis. *Journal of Political Economy*, 70(5, Part 2), 9–49.

<https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c13571/c13571.pdf>

Bejarano, A., Jindal, A., & Bhargava, B. (2017). Measuring user’s influence in the Yelp recommender system. *PSU Research Review*, 1(2), 91–104.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-02-2017-0016>

Bekhet, A. K., & Zauszniewski, J. A. (2012). Methodological triangulation: an approach to understanding data. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(2), 40–43.

<https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2012.11.20.2.40.c9442>

Berraies, S., Hamza, K. A., & Chtioui, R. (2021). Distributed leadership (DL) and exploratory and exploitative innovations: Mediating roles of tacit and explicit knowledge sharing and organizational trust. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 25(5), 1287–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-04-2020-0311>

Bichler, B. F., Pikkemaat, B., & Peters, M. (2021). Exploring the role of service quality, atmosphere, and food for revisits in restaurants by using a e–mystery guest approach. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 4(3), 351–369.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-04-2020-0048>

Bloomfield, J., & Fisher, M. J. (2019). Quantitative research design. *Journal of the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses ' Association (JARNA)*, 22(2), 27–30.

<https://doi.org/10.33235/jarna.22.2.27-30>

Blose, J. E., Frash, R. E., & DiPietro, R. B. (2019). A top box analysis of DineEx to optimize restaurant resources. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 20(2), 156–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2017.1359732>

Bolisani, E., & Bratianu, C. (2018). The emergence of knowledge management. In *Emergent knowledge strategies: Strategic thinking in knowledge management* (1st ed., Vol. 4, pp. 23–48). Springer International Publishing.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60657-6_2

- Bonello, M., & Meehan, B. (2019). Transparency and coherence in a doctoral study case analysis: Reflecting on the use of NVivo within a ‘framework’ approach. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(3), 483–498. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3823>
- Bradley, D. M., Elenis, T., Hoyer, G., & Martin, D. (2017). Human capital challenges in the food and beverage service industry of Canada: Finding innovative solutions. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 9(4), 411–423. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-04-2017-0017>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). Interview quality. In U. Flick (Ed.), *Doing interviews* (pp. 89–104). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716665>
- Brizek, M. G., Frash, R. E., McLeod, B., & Patience, M. M. (2021). Independent restaurant operator perspectives in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (R3). *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, Article 102766. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102766>
- Bufquin, D., DiPietro, R., Orłowski, M., & Partlow, C. (2018). Social evaluations of restaurant managers: The effects on frontline employees’ job attitudes and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 1827–1844. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2016-0617>
- Bufquin, D., Park, J. Y., Back, R. M., & de Souza Meira, J. V. (2021). Employee work

status, mental health, substance use, and career turnover intentions: An examination of restaurant employees during COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, Article 102764.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102764>

Bunker, M. D. (2018). Corporate chaos: The muddled jurisprudence of corporate public figures. *Communication Law and Policy*, 23(1), 1–20.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2018.1406766>

Burvill, S. M., Jones–Evans, D., & Rowlands, H. (2018). Reconceptualizing the principles of Penrose’s (1959) theory and the resource-based view of the firm: The generation of a new conceptual framework. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 25(6), 930–959. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-11-2017-0361>

Buzzby, J. (2022, January 24). *Food waste and its links to greenhouse gases and climate change*. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2022/01/24/food-waste-and-its-links-greenhouse-gases-and-climate-change>

Byrd, K., Her, E., Fan, A., Almanza, B., Liu, Y., & Leitch, S. (2021). Restaurants and COVID-19: What are consumers’ risk perceptions about restaurant food and its packaging during the pandemic? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, Article 102821. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102821>

Cain, L., Kitterlin–Lynch, M., Cain, C., & Agrusa, J. (2020). Heavy alcohol use, job satisfaction, and job escapism drinking among foodservice employees: A

- comparative analysis. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 21(3), 287–307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2018.1478355>
- Cajander, N., & Reiman, A. (2019). High performance work practices and well-being at restaurant work. *European Journal of Tourism and Hospitality and Recreation*, 9(1), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ejthr-2019-0005>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkern, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case samples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Canziani, B. F., Almanza, B., Frash, R. E., McKeig, M. J., & Sullivan-Reid, C. (2016). Classifying restaurants to improve usability of restaurant research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, 28(7), 1467–1483. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-12-2014-0618>
- Carnevale, J. B., & Hatak, I. (2020). Employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19: Implications for human resource management. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 183–187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.037>
- Carraresi, L., Mamaqi, X., Albisu, L. M., & Banterle, A. (2016). Can strategic capabilities affect performance? Application of RBV to small food businesses. *Agribusiness*, 32(3), 416–436. <https://doi.org/10.1002/agr.21451>
- Castañeda García, J. A., Rey Pino, J. M., Elkhwesky, Z., & Salem, I. E. (2023). Identifying core “responsible leadership” practices for SME restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 35(2), 419–450.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2021-1194>

Castillo–Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative Report*, 21(5), 811–831.

<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337>

Chakraborty, I., Deb, J., & Oery, A. (2022, July 6). *When do consumer's talk?* Yale University – Cowles Foundation, 2564, 1–27.

<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4155523>

Chatzoglou, P., Chatzoudes, D., Sarigiannidis, L., & Theriou, G. (2018). The role of firm–specific factors in the strategy–performance relationship: Revisiting the resource-based view of the firm and the VRIO framework. *Management Research Review*, 41(1), 46–73. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-10-2016-0243>

Cho, M., Bonn, M. A., & Han, S. J. (2020). Innovation ambidexterity: Balancing exploitation and exploration for startup and established restaurants and impacts upon performance. *Industry and Innovation*, 27(4), 340–362.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2019.1633280>

Cho, M., Bonn, M. A., & Jung, H. S. (2021). What drives restaurant competitive productivity (CP): A comprehensive examination of meso-micro levels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 33(9), 3065-

3090. <https://doi.org/10.1106/ijchm-09-2020-1040>

Chou, S. F., Horng, J. S., Liu, C. H., Huange, Y. C., & Zhang, S. N. (2020). The critical criteria for innovation entrepreneurship of restaurants: Considering the interrelationship effect of human capital and competitive strategy a case study in

Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 42, 222–234.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.01.006>

Chowdhury, M., Prayag, G., Patwardhan, V., & Kumar, N. (2020). The impact of social capital and knowledge sharing intention on restaurants' new product development. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(10), 3271–3293. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0345>

Chun, S., & Nyam–Ochir, A. (2020). The effects of fast–food restaurant attributes on customer satisfaction, revisit intention, and recommendation using DINESERV scale. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7435. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187435>

Ciesielska, M., Boström, K. W., & Öhlander, M. (2018). Observation methods. In *Qualitative methodologies in organization studies* (pp. 33–52). Palgrave Macmillan.

Ciuk, S., Koning, J., & Kostera, M. (2018). Organizational ethnographies. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative business and management research methods*, (pp. 270–285). SAGE Publications.

Clark, J., Crandall, P., & Reynolds, J. (2019). Exploring the influence of food safety climate indicators on handwashing practices of restaurant food handlers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 187–194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.06.029>

Coetzer, A., Inma, C., Poisat, P., Redmond, J., & Standing, C. (2019). Does job embeddedness predict turnover intentions in SMEs? *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 68(2), 340–361.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-03-2018-0108>

Coetzer, A., Kock, H., & Wallo, A. (2017). Distinctive characteristics of small businesses as sites for informal learning. *Human Resource Development Review*, 16(2), 111–134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484317704291>

Coffey, A. (2018). Managing and analyzing ethnographic data. In *Doing ethnography* (pp. 77–94). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526441874>

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.

https://www.academia.edu/download/55010759/creswell_Qualitative_Inquiry_2nd_edition.pdf

Crick, J. M., Crick, D., & Chaudhry, S. (2023). Interfirm collaboration as a performance-enhancing survival strategy within the business models of ethnic minority-owned urban restaurants affected by COVID-19. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 29(3), 587-613.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEER-04-2021-0279>

Dahiyat, S. E., Khasawneh, S. M., Bontis, N., & Al-Dahiyat, M. (2023). Intellectual capital stocks and flows: Examining the mediating roles of social capital and knowledge transfer. *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, 53(1), 11-42. <https://doi.org/10.1108/VJKMS-06-2020-0110>

Daniel, B. K. (2019). Using the TACT framework to learn the principles of rigour in qualitative research. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 17(3), 118–129. <https://doi.org/10.34190/JBRM.17.3.002>

- Dantas, J. A. R., & Gower, S. (2021). From ethical challenges to opportunities: Reflections on participatory and collaborative research with refugees in Australia. *Ethics & Social Welfare, 15*(2), 185–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2020.1825765>
- Das, N. (2021). Training the disadvantaged youth and labor market outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Economics, 149*, Article 102585.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2020.102585>
- Das, R., Jain, K. K., & Mishra, S. K. (2018). Archival research: A neglected method in organization studies. *Benchmarking: An International Journal, 25*(1), 138–155.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-08-2016-0123>
- Dawson, M., Guchait, P., Russen, M., & Wang, X. (2023). Hospitality organizational culture: impact on employee's job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, service recovery performance, and intention to leave. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism, 1*–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2023.2180963>
- de Casterlé, D., Gastmans, C., Bryon, E., & Denie, Y. (2012). QUAGOL: A guide for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 49*, 360–371.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2011.09.012>
- de Freitas, R. S. G., & Stedefeldt, E. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic underlines the need to build resilience in commercial restaurants' food safety. *Food Research International, 136*, Article 109472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2020.109472>
- DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. M. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care

- research: A balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 7(2), Article e000057. <https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057>
- Deters, J. (2023). *Analytics and intuition in the process of selecting talent: A holistic approach*. De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110980967>
- de Valk, G., & Goldbach, O. (2021). Towards a robust β research design: On reasoning and different classes of unknowns. *Journal of Intelligence History*, 20(1), 72–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16161262.2020.1746144>
- Dias, Á. L., Cunha, I., Pereira, L., Costa, R. L., & Gonçalves, R. (2022). Revisiting small-and medium-sized enterprises' innovation and resilience during COVID-19: the tourism sector. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(1), Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8010011>
- DiPietro, R. (2017). Restaurant and foodservice research: A critical reflection behind and an optimistic look ahead. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 1203–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-01-2016-0046>
- DiPietro, R. B., & Levitt, J. (2019). Restaurant authenticity: Factors that influence perception, satisfaction and return intentions at regional American-style restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 20(1), 101–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2017.1359734>
- Do, H., Budhwar, P., Shipton, H., Nguyen, H. D., & Nguyen, B. (2022). Building organizational resilience, innovation through resource-based management initiatives, organizational learning and environmental dynamism. *Journal of Business Research*, 141, 808–821. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.11.090>

- Donthu, N., & Gustafsson, A. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on business and research. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 284–289.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.008>
- Dossena, C., Mochi, F., Bissola, R., & Imperatori, B. (2020). Restaurants and social media: Rethinking organizational capabilities and individual competencies. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, Advance online publication.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-06-2019-0050>
- Douglas, J., Douglas, A., Cano, M., & Moyes, D. (2018, January 01). *Investigating the success of independent coffee shops and cafes in the U.K.: Findings from a pilot study*. In Excellence in Services 21st International Conference Proceedings. Le CNAM Paris, France. 297–310. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/227579548.pdf>
- Dube, A., & Lindner, A. (2021). City limits: What do local-area minimum wages do? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 35(1), 27–50.
<https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.35.1.27>
- Dube, K., Nhamo, G., & Chikodzi, D. (2021). COVID-19 cripples global restaurant and hospitality industry. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(11), 1487–1490.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1773416>
- Durdella, N. (2019a). Articulating data analysis procedures. In L. Fargotstein, M. Medina, & R. Willers (Eds.), *Qualitative dissertation methodology* (pp. 261–294). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506345147>
- Durdella, N. (2019b). Framing a dissertation study through a research tradition. In L. Fargotstein, M. Medina, & R. Willers (Eds.), *Qualitative dissertation*

methodology (pp. 87–144). SAGE Publications, Inc.,

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506345147>

Durdella, N. (2019c). Developing data collection instruments and describing data collection procedures. In L. Fargotstein, M. Medina, & R. Willers (Eds.), *Qualitative dissertation methodology* (pp. 213–260). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506345147>

Durdella, N. (2019d). Working with data sources: selecting research participants and forming research samples. In L. Fargotstein, M. Medina, & R. Willers (Eds.), *Qualitative dissertation methodology* (pp. 177–212). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506345147>

Durst, S., & Ferenhof, H. A. (2016). Knowledge risk management in turbulent times. In K. North & G. Varvakis (Eds.), *Competitive strategies for small and medium enterprises: Increasing crisis resilience, and agility in turbulent times* (pp. 195–207). Springer.

Eggers, F. (2020). Masters of disasters? Challenges and opportunities for SMEs in times of crisis. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 199–208.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.025>

Eisenhardt, K. M. (2020). Theorizing from cases: A commentary. In L. Eden, B. B. Nielsen & A. Verbeke (Eds.), *Research methods in international business* (pp. 221–227). Palgrave Macmillan.

Eisenhardt, K. M., Graebner, M., & Sonenschein, S. (2016). Grand challenges and inductive methods: Rigor without rigor mortis. *Academy of Management Journal*,

59(4), 1113–1123.

El Azzouzi, O., & Ulutagay, G. (2021). Innovation management in SME and organization development based on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Computer Science & Mobile Computing*, 10(1), 69–80.

<https://doi.org/10.47760/ijcsmc.2021.v10i01.007>

Elias, R., Leonard, W., & Mwakujonga, J. (2018). Determinants of owner–manager competencies for small business operations: Evidence from a small restaurant business in Tanzania. *Asian Business Journal*, 3, 41–47.

<https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.518.2018.31.41.47>

Elshaer, A. M. (2022). Restaurants’ response to COVID-19 pandemic: The realm of Egyptian independent restaurants. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 23(3), 716-747. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2021.1911732>

English, P., & Fleischmann, D. (2019). Food for thought in restaurant reviews.

Journalism Practice, 13(1), 90–104.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2017.1397530>

Environmental Health Specialists Network. (2022, July 19). *Food safety practices of restaurant workers*. Center for Disease Control.

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ehsnet/plain_language/food-safety-practices-restaurant-workers.htm

Fang, R., Gao, B., & Hu, N. (2021). Intangible asset value of employee satisfaction in high–contact services. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94,

Article 102810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102810>

- Ferreira, J., Mueller, J., & Papa, A. (2018). Strategic knowledge management: theory, practice, and future challenges. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 24(2), 121–126. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-07-2018-0461>
- Filimonau, V., Chiang, C. C., Wang, L. E., Muhialdin, B. J., & Ermolaev, V. A. (2023). Resourcefulness of chefs and food waste prevention in fine dining restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 108, Article 103368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103368>
- Fitzpatrick, B. (2019). Validity in qualitative health education research. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 11(2), 211–217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.11.014>
- Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation in data collection. In *The sage handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 527–544). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070>
- Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change*, 10(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02>
- Fusch, P. I., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2017). How to conduct a mini-ethnographic case study: A guide for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(3), 923–941. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2580>
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), Article 1408. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281>

- Fusté-Forné, F. (2020). Reading about Gastronomy—An approach to food contents in New York City’s newspapers. *Journalism and Media*, *1*, 18–25.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia1010002>
- Fusté-Forné, F., & Masip, P. (2018). Food in journalistic narratives: A methodological design for the study of food-based contents in daily newspapers. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, *14*, 14–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2018.08.004>
- Gadelrab, R., & Ekiz, E. (2019). An investigation of key success factors for restaurant operations in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, *5*(2), 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3601673>
- Gaudet, S., & Robert, D. (2018). Choosing tools for your fieldwork. In *A journey through qualitative research* (pp. 77–120). Sage Publications, Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716733>
- Gehman, J., Glaser, V. L., Eisenhardt, K. M., Gioia, D., Langley, A., & Corley, K. G. (2018). Finding theory–method fit: A comparison of three qualitative approaches to theory building. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *27*(3), 284–300.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492617706029>
- Giffen, R., Brown, E. A., & Jaurequi, M. (2023). Hotel organizational culture and employee personality type: Relationship with person-organization fit. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, *22*(3), 417–434.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2023.2180735>
- Gill, P., & Ballie, J. (2018). Interviews and focus groups in qualitative research: An

- update for the digital age. *British Dental Journal*, 225(7), 668–672.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.bdj.2018.815>
- Gold, R. L. (1958). Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces*, 36(3), 217–223. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2573808>
- Gordon, S., & Parikh, A. (2021). Supporting employee well-being: The case of independent restaurants. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 24(2), 215–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2020.1842956>
- Grant, R. M. (1991). The resource-based theory of competitive advantage: Implications for strategy formulation. *California Management Review*, 33(3), 114–122.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/41166664>
- Grant, R. M. (1996). Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal (1986–1998)*, 17(S2), 109–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250171110>
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PLoS ONE* 15(5), Article e0232076.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076>
- Gustomo, A., Ghina, A., Anggadwita, G., & Herliana, S. (2019). Exploring entrepreneurial competencies in identifying ideas and opportunities, managing resources, and taking action: Evidence from small catering business owners in Bandung, Indonesia. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 22(6), 509–525.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2019.1653714>
- Hadjielias, E., Christofi, M., & Tarba, S. (2022). Contextualizing small business

resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic: evidence from small business owner-managers. *Small Business Economics*, 59, 1350–1380.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-021-00588-0>

Halkias, D., & Neubert, M. (2020). Extension of theory in leadership and management studies using the multiple–case study design. *International Leadership Journal*, 12(2), 48–73. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3586256>

Harris, K. J., DiPietro, R. B., Line, N. D., & Murphy, K. S. (2019). Restaurant employees and food safety compliance: motivation comes from within. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 22(1), 98–115.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2018.1547037>

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(1), Article 19. <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-18.1.2655>

Hart, S. L. (1995). A natural–resource-based view of the firm. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(4), 986–1014. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258963>

Hatthakijphong, P., & Ting, H. (2019). Prioritizing successful entrepreneurial skills: An emphasis on the perspectives of entrepreneurs versus aspiring entrepreneurs. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 34. Article 100603.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2019.100603>

Hayat, T., & HersHKovitz, A. (2018). The role social cues play in mediating the effect of eWOM over purchasing intentions: An exploratory analysis among university students. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 17(3), 173–187.

<https://doi.org/10.1362/147539218X15434304746027>

- Heckathorn, D. D., & Cameron, C. J. (2017). Network sampling: From snowball and multiplicity to respondent-driven sampling. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43(1), 101–119. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053556>
- Henninck, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Weber, M. B. (2019). What influences saturation? Estimating sample sizes in focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 29(10), 1483–1496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318821692>
- Hight, S. K., Gajjar, T., & Okumus, F. (2019). Managers from “Hell” in the hospitality industry: How do hospitality employees’ profile bad managers? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 97–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.06.018>
- Hopkins, A. T. (2018). The use and abuse of “culture.” In C. Gilbert, B. Journé, H. Laroche & C. Beider (Eds). *Safety Cultures, Safety Models* (pp. 35–45). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95129-4_4
- Huang, Y., & Hall, C. M. (2023). Locality in the Promoted Sustainability Practices of Michelin-Starred Restaurants. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3672. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043672>
- Ishak, N. M., & Bakar, Y. A. (2014). Developing sampling frame for case study: Challenges and conditions. *World Journal of Education*, 4(3), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v4n3p29>
- Isson, J. P., & Harriott, J. S. (2016). *People analytics in the era of big data: Changing the way you attract, acquire, develop, and retain talent*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Jaglo, K., Kenny, S., & Stephenson, J. (2021). *From farm to kitchen: The environmental impacts of U.S. food waste*. Environmental Protection Agency.
https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-the-environmental-impacts-of-u.s.-food-waste_508-tagged.pdf
- Jalilvand, M. R., Salimipour, S., Elyasi, M., & Mohammadi, M. (2017). Factors influencing word of mouth behaviour in the restaurant industry. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 35(1), 81–110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-02-2016-0024>
- Jibril, I. A.; Yeşiltaş, M. (2022). Employee satisfaction, talent management practices and sustainable competitive advantage in the Northern Cyprus hotel industry. *Sustainability*, 14(12), Article 7082. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14127082>
- Jogaratnam, G. (2017a). How organizational culture influences market orientation and business performance in the restaurant industry. *Journal Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 31, 211–219. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.3.002>
- Jogaratnam, G. (2017b). The effect of market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation and human capital on positional advantage: Evidence from the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 60, 104–113.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.10.002>
- Jogaratnam, G. (2018). Human capital, organizational orientations and performance: Evidence from the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 19(4), 416–439.
<https://doi:10.1080/15256480.2017.1348920>

- Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A review of the quality indicators of rigor in qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 84(1), Article 7120. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7120>
- Jumelet, J. M., Gorgievski, M. J., & Bakker, A. B. (2022). Understanding business owners' challenge and hindrance appraisals. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 37(5), 404-424. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-11-2019-0661>
- Kaminakis, K., Karantinou, K., Koritos, C., & Gounaris, S. (2019). Hospitality servicescape effects on customer–employee interactions: A multilevel study. *Tourism Management*, 72, 130–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.11.013>
- Kang, H. J., & Eshkol–Taravella, I. (2020, May 11–16). An empirical examination of online restaurant reviews. In *Proceedings of the 12th Language Resources and Evaluation Conference*, Marseille, France. <https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/2020.lrec-1.608>
- Kankam, P. K. (2020). Approaches in information research. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, 26(1), 165–183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2019.1632216>
- Kaushik, M., & Guleria, N. (2020). The impact of pandemic COVID-19 in workplace. *European Journal of Business Management*, 12(15), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.7176/EJBM/12-15-02>
- Kawulich, B. (2012). Collecting data through observation. In C. Wagner, B. Kawulich, & M. Garner (Eds.), *Doing Social Research: A Global Context*, (pp. 150-160). McGraw-Hill Education.

- Keller, D., & Kostromitina, M. (2020). Characterizing non-chain restaurants 'Yelp star-ratings: Generalizable findings from a representative sample of Yelp reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 86. 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102440>
- Kelliher, F., Murphy, M., & Harrington, D. (2020). Exploring the role of goal setting and external accountability mechanisms in embedding strategic learning plans in small firms. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*. Advance online publication. <https://doi-org/10.1108/JSBED-12-2019-0411>
- Kim, H. S., & Jang, S. (2019). Minimum wage increases and firm productivity: Evidence from the restaurant industry. *Tourism Management*, 71, 378–388.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.10.029>
- Kim, H. S., & Jang, S. (2020). The effect of increasing employee compensation on firm performance: Evidence from the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102513>
- Kim, J., Kim, J., & Wang, Y. (2021). Uncertainty risks and strategic reaction of restaurant firms amid COVID-19: Evidence from China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, Article 102752.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102752>
- Kim, J. H., & Song, H. (2020). The influence of perceived credibility on purchase intention via competence and authenticity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, Article 102617. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102617>
- Kim, K., Bonn, M. A., & Cho, M. (2021). Clean safety message framing as survival

strategies for small independent restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 46, 423–431.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.01.016>

Kim, R. Y. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on consumers: Preparing for digital sales.

IEEE Engineering Management Review, 48(3), 212–218.

<https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2020.2990115>

King, J. R., & Stahl, N. A. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Seeing is natural.

Observation is learned. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 43(3), 26–32.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/45381084>

Kleynhans, C., Shai, M. P., & Roeloffze, A. (2018). Perceptions of different generations regarding managerial competencies in restaurants. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 10(2), 89–102.

<https://doi.org/10.22610/jeb.v10i2.2219>

Knutson, B. J., Stevens, P., & Patton, M. (1996). DINESERV: Measuring service quality

in quick service, casual/theme, and fine dining restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality*

& Leisure Marketing, 3(2), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.1300/J150v03n02_04

Kobez, M. (2018). Restaurant reviews aren't what they used to be': digital disruption and

the transformation of the role of the food critic. *Communication Research and*

Practice, 43(3), 361–375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2018.1476797>

Koelsch, L. E. (2013). Reconceptualizing the member check interview. *International*

Journal of Qualitative Methods, 168–179.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691301200105>

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part

- 2: Context, research questions and designs. *European Journal of General Practice*, 23(1), 274–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375090>
- Kosasih, K., & Saparuddin, W. (2020). The influence of ambidextrous organization and authentic followership on innovative performance: The mediating role of change readiness. *Management Science Letters*, 10, 1513–1520. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.12.015>
- Kremer, H., Villamore, I., & Aguinis, H. (2019). Innovation leadership: Best practice recommendations for promoting employee creativity, voice, and knowledge sharing. *Business Horizons*, 62(1), 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.08.010>
- Kukanja, M., Planinc, T., & Jakulin, T. J. (2019). Restaurant manager's perceptions of service quality: The mediating role of restaurant size and seating capacity. *International Journal of Quality Research*, 14(1), 237–252. <https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR14.01-15>
- Kumer, P., & Urbanc, M. (2020). Focus groups as a tool for conducting participatory research: A case study of small-scale forest management in Slovenia. In *Participatory Research and Planning in Practice*. (pp. 207–22). Springer.
- Kuo, T., Chen, C. T., & Cheng, W. J. (2018). Service quality evaluation: Moderating influences of first-time, and revisiting customers. *Total Quality Management*, 29(4), 429–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2016.1209405>
- Lai, H. B. J., Karim, S., Krauss, S. E., & Ishak, F. A. C. (2020). A review of approaches to manage menu profitability. *International Journal of Revenue Management*,

- 11(3), 151–171. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijrm.2020.109415>
- Lamont, B. T., King, D. R., Maslach, D. J., Schwerdtfeger, M., & Tienari, J. (2019). Integration capacity and knowledge-based acquisition performance. *R & D. Management*, 49(1), 103–114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12336>
- Lauri, M. A. (2019). WASP (Write a scientific paper): Collecting qualitative data using focus group. *Early Human Development*, 133, 65–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2019.03.015>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. In J. S. Brown, R. Pea, C. Heath, L. A. Suchman (Eds.), *Learning and doing: Social, cognitive and computational perspectives*. (pp. 110–111). <http://www.cambridge.org/9780521413084>
- Lee, C., & Hallak, R. (2018). Investigating the moderating role of education on a structural model of restaurant performance using multi-group PLS–SEM analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 88, 298–305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.004>
- Lee, C., Hallak, R., & Sardeshmukh, S. T. (2019). Creativity and innovation in the restaurant sector: Supply side processes and barriers to implementation. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 31, 64–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.03.11>
- Lee, C., Pung, J. M., & Del Chiappa, G. (2022). Exploring the nexus of tradition, modernity, and innovation in restaurant SMEs. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 100, Article 103091. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103091>

- Lee, C., Sardeshmukh, S. T., & Hallak, R. (2016). A qualitative study of innovation in the restaurant industry. *Anatolia*, 27(3), 367–376.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2016.1191769>
- Lee, J., & Kim, Y. J. (2020). Online reviews of restaurants expectation–confirmation theory. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 21(5), 582–599.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2020.1712308>
- Lepkowska–White, E., Parsons, A., & Berg, W. (2019). Social media marketing management: an application to small restaurants in the U.S. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, 13(3), 321–345.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-06-2019-0103>
- Lester, J. N., Cho, Y., & Lochmiller, C. R. (2020). Learning to do qualitative data analysis: A starting point. *Human Resource Development Review*, 19(1), 94–106.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484320903890>
- Li, H., Meng, F., Jeong, M., & Zhang, Z. (2020). To follow others or be yourself? Social influence in online restaurant reviews. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(3), 1067–1087. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2019-0263>
- Li, H., Yu, B. X., Li, G., & Gao, H. (2023). Restaurant survival prediction using customer-generated content: An aspect-based sentiment analysis of online reviews. *Tourism Management*, 96, Article 104707.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104707>
- Li, S., Reese, C., & Branine, M. (2019). Employees' perceptions of human resource

- management practices and employee outcomes. *Employee Relations : The International Journal*, 41(6), 1419–1433. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-01-2019-0065>
- Liao, S. H., Chen, C. C., & Hu, D. C. (2018). The role of knowledge sharing and LMX to enhance employee creativity in theme park work team: A case study of Taiwan. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(5), 2343–2359. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2016-0522>
- Lin, N., & Paez, P. (2020). Leading by example: A three-wave sequential mixed-method food safety study. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87. Article 102463. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102463>
- Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E., & Pan, B. (2018). A retrospective view of electronic word of mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 313–325. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2016-0461>
- Liu, P., & Tse, E. C. Y. (2018). Exploring factors on customers restaurant choice: an analysis of restaurant attributes. *British Food Journal*, 120(10), 2289–2303. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-10-2017-0561>
- Liu, P. P. (2016). Research on the relationship between strategic human resource management and organizational performance based on contingency mode. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 4(5), 55–60. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jhrm.20160405.12>
- Liu, Y., Yingxin, S., Sun, J., Sun, C., Liu, C., & Chen, X. (2020). Understanding the

relationship between food experiential quality and customer dining satisfaction: A perspective on negative bias. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*.

Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102381>

Luo, Y., Tang, L., Kim, E., & Wang, X. (2020). Finding the reviews on yelp that actually matter to me: Innovative approach of improving recommender systems.

International Journal of Hospitality Management, 91, Article 102697

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102697>

Lv, W., Wei, Y., Li, X., & Lin, L. (2019). What dimension of CSR matters to

organizational resilience? Evidence from China. *Sustainability*, 11(6), Article

1561. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061561>

Ma, F., DiPietro, R. B., Li, J., & Harris, K. J. (2023). Memorable dining experiences

amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Contemporary*

Hospitality Management, 35(3), 871-892. [http://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-](http://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-0117)

[0117](http://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-0117)

Maijanen, P. (2020). Approaches from strategic management: resource-based view,

knowledge-based view, and dynamic capability view. In M. Bjorn von Rimscha

& S. Keinzler (Eds.), *Management and Economics of Communication* (pp. 47–

67). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110589542-003>

Makel, M. C., Meyer, M. S., Simonsen, M. A., Roberts, A. M., & Plucker, J. A. (2022).

Replication is relevant to qualitative research, *Educational Research and*

Evaluation, 27(1-2), 215-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2021.2022310>

Markowska, M., & Wiklund, J. (2020). Entrepreneurial learning under uncertainty:

exploring the role of self-efficacy and perceived complexity. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 32(7–8), 606–628.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1713222>

Maron, S., Lussier, R. N., & Sonfield, M. (2019). Entrepreneurial strategy: The relationship between firm size and levels of innovation and risk in small businesses. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 29(3), 33–45.

<https://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/jsbs/article/view/1332>

Mascho, E., & Mao, Z. (2017). An exploratory study of managerial compensation in the restaurant industry. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(3), 270–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2017.1253432>

Maslowska, E., Malthouse, E. C., & Bernritter, S. F. (2017). Too good to be true: The role of online reviews' features in probability to buy. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(1), 142–163. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1195622>

Maslowska, E., Malthouse, E. C., & Viswanathan, V. (2017). Do customer reviews drive purchase decisions? The moderating roles of review exposure and price. *Decision Support Systems*, 98, 1–9. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2017.03.010>

Mathayomchan, B., & Taecharungroj, V. (2020). “How was your meal?” Examining customer experience using Google maps reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, Article 102641.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.06.004>

Matti, J. (2020). Reaching for the stars: Spatial competition and consumer reviews.

Atlantic Economic Journal, 48(3), 339–353. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11293-020->

[09679-x](#)

Mauthner, N. S. (2019). Toward a posthumanist ethics of qualitative research in a big data era. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 63(6), 669–698.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218792701>

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2019). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, 41(9), 1002–1006.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149>

McKenzie, P. (2019). Maintaining good relationships with research participants. In D. L. Brien, C. Batty, E. Ellison, & A. Owens (Eds.), *The doctoral experience: Student stories from the creative arts and humanities* (pp. 147–156). Palgrave Macmillan.

McKim, C. A. (2017). The value of mixed-methods research: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of mixed-methods Research*, 11(2), 202–222.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689815607096>

Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Mhlanga, O. (2018a). Drivers of restaurant efficiency in South Africa: A stochastic frontier approach. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, 12(4), 407–419. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-01-2018-0014>

Mhlanga, O. (2018b). Factors impacting restaurant efficiency: A data envelopment analysis. *Tourism Review*, 73(1), 82–93. [https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-07-2017-](https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-07-2017-0109)

[0109](#)

- Millum, J., & Bromwich, D. (2020). Informed consent: What must be disclosed and what must be understood? *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 21(5), 46–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2020.1863511>
- Mishra, S., & Subudhi, R. N. (2019). The methodological domain in management research. In R. N. Subudhi, & S. Mishra (Eds.), *Methodological issues in management research: Advances, challenges, and the way ahead*. (pp. 1–10). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78973-973-220191001>
- Mohamad, S. F., Ying, L. L., Othman, M., Abidin, U. F. U. Z., Ishak, F. A. C., & Bakar, A. Z. A. (2020). Demanded competencies of the entry-level position in the restaurant industry: Employers' perspectives. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(3), 823–835.
<http://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i3/7095>
- Morgan Brett, B. (2021). What interviewing style should I use? [Video]. SAGE Research Methods. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529763126>
- Morsing, M., & Spence, L. J. (2019). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication and small and medium sized enterprises: The governmentality dilemma of explicit and implicit CSR communication. *Human Relations*, 72(12), 1920–1947. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718804306>
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>

- Mostafa, A. M. S. (2019). Transformational leadership and restaurant employees customer-oriented behaviours: The mediating role of organizational social capital and work engagement. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1166–1182. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2018-0123>
- Muhammad, R. A., & Salma, N. (2021). The effects of intellectual capital and knowledge management processes on dynamic capabilities of the organizations. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(3), 2154–2162. <https://doi.org/10.47750/cibg.2021.27.03.265>
- Mun, W. G., & Jang, S. (2018). Restaurant operating expenses and their effects on profitability enhancement. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 68–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.12.002>
- Mupani, H., & Chipunza, C. (2019). Environmental influences, employee resourcing strategies and small and medium-sized enterprises performance: Case of South African small restaurants. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(0), a1004. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v17i0.1104>
- Mustafa, M., & Elliott, C. (2019). The curious case of human resource development in family-small-to-medium sized enterprises. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 30(3), 281–290. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21370>
- Mustapa, I. R., & Malak, S. S. D. A. (2017). Organizational capacity as potential moderator in enhancing corporate performance: A proposed framework. *Asia Pacific Journal of Advanced Business and Social Studies (APJABSS)*, 3(1), 261–269. <https://repo.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/22017>

- Naderi, I., Paswan, A. K., & Guzman, F. (2018). Beyond the shadow of a doubt: The effect of consumer knowledge on restaurant evaluation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 45, 221–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.09.004>
- Nagano, H. (2020). The growth of knowledge through the resource-based view *Management Decision*, 58(1). 98–111. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-11-2016-0798>
- Najib, M., Septiani, S., & Nurlaela, S. (2020). The role of innovation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and local uniqueness on marketing performance in small and medium-sized restaurants, *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 23(6), 499–519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2020.1803687>
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html>
- National Restaurant Association. (2020, November 14). About Us.
<https://restaurant.org/about-us/>
- Naujoks, A., & Benkenstein, M. (2020). Who is behind the message? The power of expert reviews on eWom platforms. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 44, Article 101015. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2020.101015>
- Neffke, F. M. H. (2019). The value of complementary co-workers. *Science Advances*, 5, eaax337. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aax3370>

- Nemeschansky, B. (2020). Listen to your customer – how to manage your restaurant more effectively. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 23(1), 17–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2019.1671119>
- Ntlhanngoe, L., & Chipunza, C. (2021). Owner–managers’ transformational leadership behaviours and human resources strategies: A case of small fast-food restaurants in South Africa. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(0), Article a1482. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajrhm.v19i0.1482>
- O’Bryan, C., & Casey, A. M. (2017). Talent management: Hiring and developing engaged employees. *Library Leadership & Management*, 32(1), 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/llm.v32i1.7232>
- Ode, E., & Ayavoo, R. (2020). The mediating knowledge application in the relationship between knowledge management practices and firm innovation. *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge*, 5, 209–217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2019.08.002>
- Ogunmokun, O. A., Eluwole, K. K., Avci, T., Lasisi, T. T., & Ikhide, J. E. (2020). Propensity to trust and knowledge sharing behavior: An evaluation of importance–performance analysis among Nigerian restaurant employees. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 33, Article 100590.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.100590>
- Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-7.4.175>
- Østergaard, A. (2019). The beneficial differentiation within entrepreneurship of self–

- employed, business owner and entrepreneur. *Industry and Higher Education*, 33(1), 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422218816554>
- O’Sullivan, L., Feeney, L., Crowley, R. K., Sukumar, P., McAuliffe, E., & Doran, P. (2021). An evaluation of the process of informed consent: views from research participants and staff. *Trials*, 22(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-021-05493-1>
- Ouakouak, M. L., & Ouedraogo, N. (2019). Fostering knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization: The impact of organizational commitment and trust. *Business Process Management Journal*, 25(4), 757–779. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BPMJ-05-2017-0107>
- Oyakhire, V. A., & Makpor, S. (2021). Entrepreneurial competence and organizational performance of SMEs in Edo State, Nigeria., *International Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship*, 3(1), 256–264. <https://ijmecoou.org/index.php/ijme/article/download/44/44>
- Paais, M., & Pattiruhu, J. R. (2020). Effect of motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on satisfaction and employee performance. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(8), 577-588. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no8.577>
- Parikh, A. A., Behnke, C., Almanza, B., Nelson, D., & Vorvoreanu, M. (2017). Comparative content analysis of professional, semiprofessional, and user-generated reviews. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 20(5), 497–411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1537802.0.2016.129170>

- Parsa, H. G., Shuster, B. K., & Bujisic, M. (2020). New classification system for the U.S. restaurant industry: Application of utilitarian and hedonic continuum model. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/192896551989929>
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189–1208. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089059/>
- Paynter, B. (2018). Zagat: A survival guide. *Fast Company*, 227, 86–92.
- Penrose, E. (1960). The growth of the firm—A case study: The Hercules Powder Company. *Business History Review*, 34(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3111776>
- Perez de la Lastra, S. F., Martin–Alcazar, F., & Sanchez–Gardey, G. (2020). Ambidextrous intellectual capital in the haute cuisine sector. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(1), 173–192. <https://doi.org.10.1106/ijchm-12-201084007>
- Phillippi, J., & Lauderdale, J. (2018). A guide to field notes for qualitative research: Context and conversation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(3), 381–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317697102>
- Phillipson, S. (2020). Sources of innovation: Consequences for knowledge production and transfer. *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge*, 5, 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2019.01.002>
- Pitelis, C. N., & Wagner, J. D. (2019). Strategic shared leadership and organizational dynamic capabilities. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 30(2), 233–242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.08.002>

- Polonsky, M. J., & Waller, D. S. (2019). Qualitative data collection and issues in analysis. In *Designing and managing a research project* (pp. 195–221). Sage Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544316499>
- Porter, M. E. (1980). Industry structure and competitive strategy: Keys to profitability. *Financial Analysts Journal*, 36(4), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.2469/faj.v36.n4.30>
- Pranata, I., & Susilo, W. (2016). Are the most popular users always trustworthy? The case of Yelp. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 20, 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2016.09.005>
- Prasetyaningrum, T., & Hendarsjah, H. (2022). The mediation role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the relationship between person-organization fit (PO Fit) and employee performance. *Business Review and Case Studies*, 3(1), 74-74. <http://doi.org/10.17358/brcs.3.1.74>
- Prior, M. T. (2018). Accomplishing “rapport” in qualitative research interviews: Empathic moments in interaction. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9(4), 487–511. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2017-0029>
- Prompting, K., & Hu, C. (2021). The role of knowledge-sharing behaviour in the relationship between the knowledge creation process and employee goal orientation. *International Journal of Business Science & Applied Management*, 16(2). 46–63. <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/261653>
- Putra, E. D., & Cho, S. (2019). Characteristics of small business leadership from employees perspective: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 78, 36-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.11.011>

- Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 369–387. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.887089>
- Rawlinson, S., Ciric, L., & Cloutman–Green, E. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic—let’s not forget surfaces. *Journal of Hospital Infection*, 105(4), 790–791. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.05.022>
- Reilly, T. M., & Jones, R. (2017). Mixed-methodology in family business research: Past accomplishments and perspectives for the future. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 8, 185–195. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfbs.2017.08.003>
- Repetti, T., & Roe, S. (2018). Minimum wage change effects on restaurant pricing and employment. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 1545–1562. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2016-0130>
- Rezaei, M., Giovando, G., Rezaei, S., & Sadraei, R. (2022). What are the fundamental knowledge-sharing drivers of small family businesses in the restaurant and fast-food industry? *British Food Journal*, 124(7), 2149-2178. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-08-2021-0948>
- Roberts, K., Dowell, A., & Nie, J. B. (2019). Attempting rigour and replicability in thematic analysis of qualitative research data; a case study of codebook development. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 19(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0707-y>
- Rodriguez–Dorans, E. (2018). Reflexivity and ethical research practice while interviewing on sexual topics. *International Journal of Social Research*

Methodology, 21(6), 747–760. <https://doi.org/10.1018/13645579.2018.1490980>

Rodriguez-Lopez, M. E., Alcantara-Pilar, J. M., Del Barrio-Garcia, S., & Munoz-Leiva, F. (2020). A review of restaurant research in the last two decades: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87, Article 102387.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102387>

Romero, I., Gomez, I. P., & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, J. M. (2019). ‘Cookpetition’: Do restaurants cooperate to innovate? *Tourism Economics*, 25(6), 904-922.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816618811551>

Ross, P. T., & Zaidi, N. L. B. (2019). Limited by our limitations. *Perspectives on Medical Education* 8, 261–264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-00530-x>

Ruggiano, N., & Perry, T. E. (2019). Conducting secondary analysis of qualitative data: Should we, can we, and how? *Qualitative Social Work*, 18(1), 81–87.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325017700701>

Sagiyeva, R., Zhuparova, A., Ruzanov, R., Doszhan, R., & Askerov, A. (2018).

Intellectual input of development by knowledge-based economy: Problems of measuring in countries with developing markets. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 6(2), 711. [https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.6.2\(17\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.6.2(17))

Sajjadiani, S., Sojourner, A. J., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., & Mykerezzi, E. (2019). Using machine learning to translate applicant work history into predictors of performance and turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000405>

Salman, M., Ganie, S. A., & Saleem, I. (2020). Employee competencies as predictors of

- organizational performance: A study of public and private sector banks. *Manage and Labour Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0258042X20939014>
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(4), 1893–1907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods of business students* (8th ed.) [ebook]. Pearson Professional Limited
- Saunders, M., & Townsend, K. (2018). Choosing participants. In Cassell, C, Cunliffe, A, and Grandy, G (eds) *The Sage handbook of qualitative business and management research methods* (pp. 480–494). SAGE Publications Ltd
- Schreier, M. (2018). Sampling and generalization. In *The Sage handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 84–97). SAGE Publications Ltd., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070>
- Schwartzman, H. B. (1993). Fieldwork roles and fieldwork processes. In *Ethnography in organizations* (pp. 47–72). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984119>
- Scott, C. P. R., Dieguez, T.A., Deepak P., Gu, S., & Wildman, J.L. (2022). Onboarding during COVID-19: Create structure, connect people, and continue adapting. *Organizational Dynamics*, 51(2). 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2021.100828>
- Seo, S., Miao, L., Almanza, B., & Behnke, C. (2018). How have restaurant firms

responded to food safety crises? Evidence from media coverage. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 21(1), 83–105.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2017.1297922>

Shaheen, M., Pradhan, S., & Ranajee (2019). Sampling in qualitative research. In *Qualitative techniques for workplace data analysis* (pp. 25–51). IGI Global.

<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-5366-3.ch002>

Shahzadi, M., Malik, S. A., Ahmad, M., & Shabbir, A. (2018). Perceptions of fine dining restaurants in Pakistan: What influences customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions? *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 35(3),

635–655. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-07-2016-0113>

Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(7), 749–752.

Sharma, P., Leung, T. Y., Kingshott, R. P., Davcik, N. S., & Cardinali, S. (2020). Managing uncertainty during a global pandemic: An international business perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 188–192.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.026>

Sheehan, M., Grant, K., & Garavan, T. (2018). Strategic talent management: A macro and micro analysis of current issues in hospitality and tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 10(1), 28–41. [https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-](https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-10-2017-0062)

[10-2017-0062](https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-10-2017-0062)

Shen, A., Wang, P., & Ma, Y. (2022). When crowding-in and when crowding-out? The boundary conditions on the relationship between negative online reviews and

online sales. *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 43(6), 2016-2032.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/mde.3505>

Shigihara, A. M. (2020). Postmodern life restaurants and COVID-19. *Contexts*, 19(4), 26–31. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1536504220977931>

Shum, C., Gatling, A., & Shoemaker, S. (2018). A model of hospitality leadership competency for frontline and director-level managers: Which competencies matter more? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 74, 57–66.

<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.002>

Simic, M., Slavkovic, M., & Aleksic, V. S. (2020). Human capital and SME performance: Mediating effect of entrepreneurial competence. *Journal of Sustainable Business and Management Solutions in Emerging Economies*, 25(3), 23–33.

<https://doi.org/10.7595/management.fon.2020.0009>

Skiba, M., O'Halloran, P., & Hope, A. (2019). The opaque glass ceiling: Five forces affecting the progress of professional female workers in the U.S. *The Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(1), 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jbd.v19i1.1355>

Sohrabi, C., Alsafi, Z., O'Neill, N., Khan, M., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A., & Agha, R. (2020). World Health Organization declares global emergency: A review of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). *International Journal of Surgery*, 76, 71–

76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijssu.2020.02.034>

Son, J. H., Kim, J. H., & Kim, G. J. (2021). Does employee satisfaction influence customer satisfaction? Assessing coffee shops through the service profit chain model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, Article 102866.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102866>

- Song, H. J., Yeon, J., & Lee, S. (2021). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from the US restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, Article 102702. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102702>
- Stanczyk, E., Stanczyk, P., & Szalonka, K. (2020). The impact of personality and competence of leaders on business success. *European Research Studies Journal*, 23(2), 612–623. <https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/1612>
- Stevens, P., Knutson, B., & Patton, M. (1995). DINESERV: A tool for measuring service quality in restaurants. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 36(2), 5–60. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-8804\(95\)93844-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-8804(95)93844-K)
- Stoian, C., & Gilman, M. (2017). Corporate social responsibility that “pays”: A strategic approach to CSR for SMEs. *Journal of Small Business Management* 55(1). 5–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12224>
- Sun, Y., & Paule, J. D. G. (2017). Spatial analysis of users-generated ratings of yelp venues. *Open Geospatial Data, Software Standards*, 2(5), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40965-017-0020-9>
- Suryawan, I. N. (2020). Management success factors in managing restaurant businesses. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 25(3), 337–351. <http://doi.org/10.24912/je.v25i3.684>
- Susomrith, P., Coetzer, A., & Ampofo, E. (2019). Training and development in small professional services firms. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 43(5/6), 497–515. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-11-2018-0113>
- Sussman, R. (2016). Observational methods: The first step in science. *Research Methods*

for Environmental Psychology, 9–27.

- Taneja, S., Pryor, M. G., & Hayek, M. (2016). Leaping innovation barriers to small business longevity. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 37(3), 44–51.
<http://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-12-2014-0145>
- Taylor, C. R. (2018). The new era of electronic word of mouth (eWOM): ‘Be more Chill’ overrules the critics. *International Journal of Advertising*, 37(6), 849–851.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2018.1521899>
- Taylor, S. (2020). The socially distant servicescape: An investigation of consumer preference’s during the re-opening phase. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 102692. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102692>
- Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2019). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing (GORNA)*, 7(3), 155–162.
<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022>
- Tiago, T., Amaral, N., & Tiago, F. (2017). Food experiences, the oldest social network. In Kavoura, A., Tomaras, P., Sakas, D. P. (Eds.). *Strategic Innovative Marketing*, 435–444. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-33865-1>
- Toye, F., Williamson, E., Williams, M. A., Fairbank, J., & Lamb, S. E. (2016). What value can qualitative research add to quantitative research design? An example from an adolescent idiopathic scoliosis trial feasibility study. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1838–1850. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316662446>
- Tracy, S. J., & Hinrichs, M. M. (2017). Big tent criteria for qualitative quality. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, 1–10.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0016>

Trequatrini, R., Massaro, M., Lardo, A., & Cuzzo, B. (2019), “Knowledge transfer and managers turnover: impact on team performance”, *Business Process Management Journal*, 25(1), 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BPMJ-06-2017-0169>

Tyagi, M., & Bolia, N. B. (2021). Approaches for restaurant revenue management. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*, 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41272-021-00288-0>

Uddin, G. S., Hernandez, J. A., Dutta, A., Kang, S. H., & Yoon, S. (2020). Impact of food price volatility on the US restaurant sector. *Applied Economics*, 53(39), 4250–4262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2020.1733478>

U. S. Census Bureau. (2022). *North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Manual*. <https://www.census.gov/naics/>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020a). *2017 SUSB Annual Data tables by establishment industry* [Data set]. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/econ/susb/2017-susb-annual.html>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020b). *NAICS update fact sheet*.

https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/reference_files_tools/NAICS_Update_Process_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Uslu, A. (2020). The relationship of service quality dimensions of restaurant enterprises with satisfaction, behavioural intention, eWOM, and the moderating effect of atmosphere. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 16(3), 25–35.

<https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2020.160303>

- U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. (2020a). *2020 small business profile: Pennsylvania congressional district*. <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/12152221/Pennsylvania-2020-Congressional-District-Profiles.pdf>
- U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. (2020b). *Small business at-a-glance. Small business economic bulletin: April 2020*. <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/30103025/April-2020-Econ-Bulletin.pdf>
- Veliu, L., & Manxhari, M. (2017). The impact of managerial competencies on business performance: SME's in Kosovo. *Journal of Management*, 30(1), 59–65.
- Verleye, K. (2019). Designing, writing-up and reviewing case study research: An equifinality perspective. *Journal of Service Management*, 30(5), 549–576. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-08-2019-0257>
- Vuban, J. A., & Eta, E. A. (2019). Negotiating access to research sites and participants within an African context: The case of Cameroon. *Research Ethics*, 15(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016118798874>
- Wahyuni, N. M., & Sara, I. M. (2020). The effect of entrepreneurial orientation variables on business performance in the SME industry context. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 32(1), 35–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-03-2019-0033>
- Wästerfors, D. (2018). Observations. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, (pp. 314–236.) Sage Publications, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070>

- Welch, C., & Piekkari, R. (2017). How should we (not) judge the 'quality' of qualitative research? A reassessment of current evaluative criteria in *International Business Journal of World Business*, 52(5), 714–725.
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2017.05.007>
- Wells, R. E. (2021). Teaming up with the IRB: The power of collaboration. *Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics*, 11(1), 26–29. <https://doi.org/10.1353/nib.2021.0009>
- Wellton, L., & Lainpelto, J. (2021). The intertwining of professional knowledge culture, leadership practices, and sustainability in the restaurant industry. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 21(5), 550–566.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2021.1977177>
- Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm: Summary. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(2), 171–180. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2486175>
- Wernerfelt, B. (1995). A resource-based view of the firm: Ten years after. *Strategic Management Journal*, 16(3), 171–174. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2486738>
- Wilmoth, D. (2020). *Small business facts: Restaurants and bars staggered by the pandemic*. U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy.
<https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/29105857/Small-Business-Facts-Restaurants-And-Bars-Staggered-By-Pandemic.pdf>
- Wright, P. M., Dunford, B. B., & Snell, S. A. (2001). Human resources and the resource-based view of the firm. *Journal of Management* 27(6), 701–721.
<https://doi.org/s10.1177/014920630102700607>
- Xia, Y., & Ha, H. Y. (2021). Does customer orientation matter? Direct and indirect

- effects in a service quality-sustainable restaurant satisfaction framework in China. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1051
- Xu, X. (2021). What are customers commenting on, and how is their satisfaction affected? Examining online reviews in the on-demand food service context. *Decision Support Systems*, 142, Article 113467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2020.113467>
- Yawson, R. (2020). Strategic flexibility analysis of HRD research and practice post COVID-19 pandemic. *Human Resource Development International*, 23(4), 406–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1779169>
- Yelp. (2021, February 21). Yelp trust and safety report 2020. <https://trust.yelp.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Yelp-Trust-and-Safety-Report-2020.pdf>
- Yin, R. K. (2000). Case study evaluations: A decade of progress? In *Evaluation models* (pp. 185–193). Springer.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed). Sage Publications
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed). Sage Publications.
- Zahra, S. A. (2021). The resource-based view, resourcefulness, and resource management in startup firms: A proposed research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 47(7), 1841–1860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063211018505>
- Zhang, W., Roberts, K. R., Jang, J., & Durtschi, J. (2021). Why do people leave? A study of nonsupervisory restaurant employees' polychronic time use preference and turnover intention. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*

Administration, 22(1), 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2018.1547237>

Zhao, Y., Wang, L., Tang, H., & Zhang, Y. (2020). Electronic word-of-mouth and consumer purchase intentions in social e-commerce. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 41, Article 100980.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2020.100980>

Zopiatis, A., & Theodorou, A. L. (2018). PRAXIS: The determining element of innovation behavior in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 35, 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.12.004>

Appendix A: Participation Request Email

My name is Alice Nelson–Sidibe, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University’s College of Management and Human Potential. I kindly request your participation in a research study titled: Independent Restaurant Owners ’Strategies for Acquiring, Managing, and Retaining Organizational Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.

The intention is to learn from successful business owners, like you, about ways the knowledge, skills, and abilities of yourself and your employees have helped your business remain operational beyond 5 years, has 20 or fewer employees, and has a Yelp rating of 3.5 or higher.

Your time is valuable, so each session below will be scheduled at your convenience to minimize any impact on your restaurant’s operations. The study involves completing an interview session, targeted observations within your restaurant, and a review of relevant organizational records as outlined below:

1. A recorded interview of your answers to interview questions and a review of any relevant organizational records based on your answers to the questions. (90 minutes)
2. A review of the interpreted themes and patterns from the interview to ensure that I have accurately captured your words. (30 minutes)
3. Observe you as you oversee and conduct activities that support the acquisition, management, or retainment of knowledge, skills, and abilities (2 hours)
4. Provide any organizational documents to the researcher that relate to the topic of the study.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and confidential. Your specific stories will be part of the study, but I will not expose your name or the name of your restaurant. I would appreciate your participation in this study for the betterment and future of other independent restaurants. If you have any questions that I may answer or if you are interested in participating, please reach out to me via email at alice.nelson-sidibe@waldenu.edu or by phone at (215) 839-6363. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alice Nelson–Sidibe

Appendix B: Referring Participant Confidentiality Informant

Would you be willing to provide the name of one person within your network that meets the basic requirements of owning an independent restaurant and operating it for more than 5 years to be part of this study?

If you say yes, please note that I will not be able to disclose to you whether they agree to participate, and I will not disclose whether you are a participant. I will use your name in the introduction and if any inquiries are made regarding your participation, I will inform the potential participant that I cannot confirm nor deny anyone's participation in the study only share that you provided their name as a potential participant.

Also, I will need to verify the final entry requirement which is the number of Yelp reviews and star ratings of the restaurant before attempting to recruit them for participation in the study.

If you agree, please provide me with the person's name, email address, and phone number which I will only use for purposes of this research study.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interviewer	Alice Nelson–Sidibe		
Participant Name			
Participant Code			
Duration	90 minutes		
Interview Start Time		Interview End Time	

Open Interview

- Introduction, build rapport. Use general comfortable questions.
 - How long have you been in the restaurant business?
 - What led you to open a restaurant?
 - What do you find most rewarding about owning a restaurant?
- Confirm receipt of the informed consent form and sample interview questions
- Sign the consent form and provide a copy to the participant.
- Review all steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality.
- Start the speech to text recorder and backup recording device.

Open Line of Questioning

- Begin with question 1 and continue until complete.
- Use probing technique and sample questions as needed.
 - What strategies do you use to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Probe to ensure understanding of tactics and methods used to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs.
 - How did you measure the success of the strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Probe to ensure understanding of what success looks like for the owner.

- What strategies did you find that worked best to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Probe to uncover what owners believe are the best ways to acquire, manage, and retain KSAs.
- What were the key challenges to implementing the strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Probe to ensure understanding of all previous and current challenges.
- How did you address the key challenges to implementing strategies to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Probe to uncover all the ways owners have overcome challenges.
- What additional information can you share about the strategies you used to acquire, manage, and retain organizational KSAs to successfully sustain the business beyond 5 years?
 - Continue probing until strategies for KSA acquisition, retainment, and management experiences are exhausted.
- Confirm synthesis of response to the question(s).

Close Interview Line of Questioning

- Thank the participant for their time and openness to being a part of this research.
- Remind participant of member-checking and confirm continued access either by phone or in person. Confirm it will be 30 minutes.
- Confirm schedule for observation.
- Schedule member-checking meeting, if possible.
- Provide contact information to participants in case they have any questions.
- Confirm telephone number and preference for follow-up meeting (phone/in-person).

Appendix D: Observation Protocol Guide

Observer	Alice Nelson–Sidibe		
Date			
Location of Observation			
Observation Focus			
Duration			
Observation Start Time		Observation End Time	

- Describe or draw the observation area. (Where)
 - Consider the following observable indicators. Expand based on feedback from the interviewee.
- Describe the observed KSAs of the IRO indicated during the activity. (What)
- Describe the IROs activity during the observation. (What)
- Describe if the IRO activity could be considered as acquiring, managing, or retaining KSAs? (What)
- At what intervals did activities or behaviors change (sequencing)?
- Is this a normal event/occurrence? (When)