

CROSS-CULTURAL SERVICE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

A Case Study at GastroBar Saimaa

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Abstract

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Title of the thesis CROSS-CULTURAL SERVICE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT A case study at GastroBar Saimaa		
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Abstract Globalization has led to increasingly multicultural restaurants with diverse cuisines, customers, and workforces. This study examines how cross-cultural context affects both service design and multicultural management through the case of Gastrobar Saimaa, a pop-up restaurant with a multicultural staff and customer. We find that an open, learning oriented management style can help to overcome international cultural differences and participant inexperience in the kitchen and dining room. We also find that cross cultural management is an important element of service design in multicultural settings. Poor training of the staff results in poor service. The study contributes to the practical training of students in a restaurant setting by developing some tools that help in the management of student led pop-up restaurants and to the restaurant industry by suggesting ideas for overcoming the challenges of running a successful business in a multicultural environment.		
Keywords Cross cultural management, case study, pop-up restaurant, practical training, service design		

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1 Introduction

The growing globalisation has transformed the restaurant industry into a cultural combination. From international cuisine to multicultural customers and workforces, restaurants are often cross-cultural. Multicultural settings bring opportunities and challenges in service design and management. It introduces complexity due to different cultural norms and expectations related to food, service, communication, and relationships with others. These differences may significantly impact service quality and customer satisfaction. Managers and employees face challenges in adapting service delivery to a multicultural customer while promoting effective internal management, particularly within an international restaurant team. The pop-up restaurant Gastrobar Saimaa demonstrates these issues through its multicultural staff, management, and customers. This case illustrates the practical application of service design and cross-cultural management. In practice, many restaurant managers struggle to achieve the balance between service design and cross-cultural management. This study incorporates practical solutions from the case study of Gastrobar Saimaa into theoretical discussions, offering helpful suggestions for other restaurants.

The findings from this thesis work are relevant for the managers or employees of a restaurant that is operating in a cross-cultural context. This could mean situations where the customers, the management, the restaurant cuisine or the employees have different cultural backgrounds. This is particularly true when trying to start a new restaurant. The thesis conclusions can also be important for consultants attempting to work with these types of restaurants or researchers studying them.

The first objective of the thesis is to understand how the international context impacts both service design and management. In particular, the thesis aims to understand the connection between service design and cross-cultural management. This study considers cross-cultural management to be an additional challenge in the service design of a restaurant. If the challenge is not reflected in the service design, then the assumption is that the overall customer experience will be poor because the service will be implemented poorly. There may be other factors that need to be considered, but the study limits analysis to these two. For example, profitability and other financial considerations might be a third aspect to consider. Another limitation is that we are only looking at a single pop-up event at Gastrobar Saimaa as our case study, so we cannot generalise our conclusions.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Cross-cultural Differences

2.1.1 Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede (1980) identified four elements as "Power Distance," "Uncertainty Avoidance," "Individualism versus Collectivism," and "Masculinity versus Femininity." Two elements will be applied in the pop-up restaurant at GastroBar Saimaa.

2.1.2 Individualism vs. Collectivism

Triandis and Gelfand (1998) provide an understanding of individualism by distinguishing between two distinct types: horizontal individualism and vertical individualism, observing that Finland is regarded as an individualistic culture, despite its tendency towards collectivism. Horizontal individualism is predicated on the concept of a free individual who value fairness among individuals, whereas vertical individualism acknowledges diversity and encourages competition among individuals. The Culture Factor Group (2024) indicates that Vietnam has a score of 30, while Finland has a score of 75. The scores indicate that Vietnam is a collectivist country, while Finland is an individualistic one. This may influence the arrangement of the dining area. Finnish people might prefer greater privacy in dining arrangements compared to the communal style preferred by Vietnamese individuals.

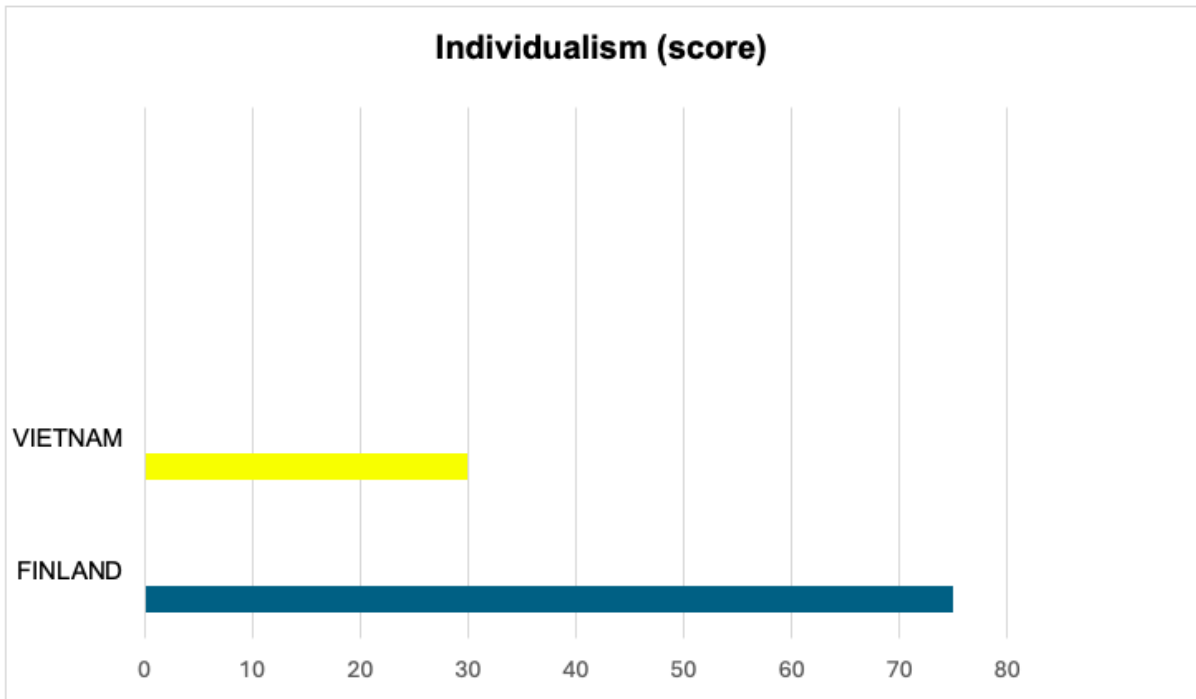


Figure 1. Country Comparison in Individualism: Vietnam and Finland (The Culture Factor Group 2024)

The multicultural restaurant environment in Finland includes people from many different countries. According to The Culture Factor Group (2024), Finland, Russia, China, Sri Lanka scored 75, 46, 43, and 35, respectively. Vietnam and Nepal have the same score of 30.

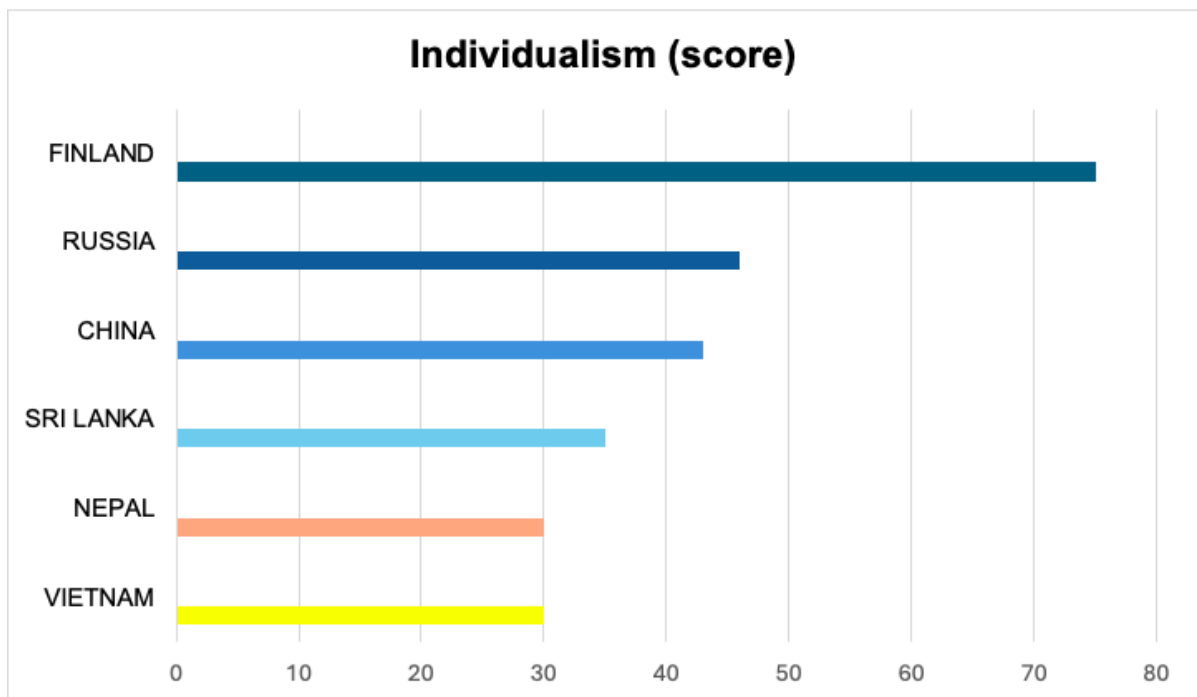


Figure 2. Country Comparison in Individualism (The Culture Factor Group 2024)

Most Asian countries tend to be collectivist, where family and social relationships are of great value. Hofstede (1980) shows that relationships are weak when the IDV score is higher. There is less responsibility for the behaviour of other people. In contrast, in a society based on collectivism, it is expected that individuals will maintain their loyalty to their group. This society will prioritise their own interests. The health and safety of others are the responsibility of each individual.

2.1.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

The degree of uncertainty avoidance is the measure by which a culture perceives discomfort or threat because of ambiguity, unclearness, or uncertainty. It shows the way communities manage their worries regarding the unknown and how they modify their environment to reduce this fear. This feeling appears, for instance, through anxiety and a desire for predictability, involving both implicit and explicit regulations. (Hofstede et al. 1991.) While Finland might have flexibility in its regulations, it emphasises clarity and transparency in its services and procedures. Some suggestions for designing menus and services in Finland: employ clear and unambiguous language, provide details regarding application services and nutritional ingredients, manage the service procedure, transparent and professional communication.

2.2 Cross-cultural Service Design

The objective of service design is to enhance operations and boost productivity while optimizing customer experiences and organizational efficiency. Cross-cultural service design successfully meets the specific requirements of individuals from diverse backgrounds and avoids misconceptions regarding other cultures. In multicultural contexts such as Finland, it emphasizes the importance of developing services that accommodate diverse communication standards, values, and preferences. Restaurants can enhance their service design through cross-cultural approaches, allowing them to adapt their products and interactions to diverse cultural requirements while maintaining international service standards.

2.2.1 Service Design

The role of creative thinking and realism in service design is to enhance not only current service but also new ones. Service design is a field that uses design methodologies and capabilities to create or improve services. (Stickdorn et al. 2018.)

Service design integrates creativity with practicality. Creativity in the design process can often be measured by an essential occurrence known as the 'creative leap' (Dorst & Cross 2001). Creativity plays a crucial role in designing products that are appealing, innovative, and

potentially disruptive. Service designers need to apply innovative thinking to solve challenges creatively. Practicality emphasises that solutions must be both feasible and implementable. The emphasis is on ensuring that concepts operate within established limitations (budget, components, customer expectations) and effectively address genuine issues while showcasing the organization's actual capabilities.

Services have to solve an issue or meet a particular customer requirement. Failure to meet customer needs makes a product or service worthless. Service design guarantees that the developed or enhanced service meets a significant purpose for the consumer. According to Moritz (2005), service design is crucial for fostering opportunities in service innovation. It enhances existing services to increase efficiency, accessibility, and attract to customers. Simultaneously, service design aims to boost the efficiency and productivity of organizations. Service design emphasises enhancing the customer experience while also underscoring the performance and efficiency of the services-providing organizations, including cost efficiency, implementation speed, and resource management to reduce waste and optimise operations. A restaurant can use service design to enhance kitchen workflow, decrease preparation time, and decrease food waste, thereby lowering costs and boosting profits.

2.2.2 Cross-cultural Service Design

Cross-cultural service design includes considering the desires and requirements of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds through the development of services. A cross-cultural service design methodology combines service design elements with an understanding of cultural differences in practices. Creating services that are appropriate with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds is a challenging task. One of the most challenging tasks is avoiding cultural stereotypes. It is recommended to avoid making unnecessary assumptions or thinking that all users from a particular culture will behave in a similar manner. (Nielsen 1994.)

2.2.3 The Importance of Cross-cultural Service Design

Tansitpong (2012) believes that services are significantly influenced by culture, as culture affects individuals' thoughts, decisions, and behaviours in both personal and professional contexts (Ghiasian et al. 2022). Cross-cultural service design is crucial in the restaurant industry as it provides the customisation of service components that match the values and expectations of customers from many different backgrounds. In an international context such as Finland, the diversity of cultures can affect customer service experiences through variations in behaviour and preferences. Comprehending and implementing service design suited to each cultural group enhances customer satisfaction as well as helps restaurants appeal to

and keep clients of various backgrounds. Cross-cultural service design ensures that the customer experience maintains common standards while also adapting to differences in communication norms and cultural values. This is particularly significant when serving a diverse clientele or when presenting the cuisine of one nation to another culture, such as offering Vietnamese cuisine in Finland.

2.2.4 Cultural Adaptation in Service Design

Cultural adaptation in service design is essential for developing an effective customer experience, as consumer behaviour can often be influenced by cultural values and features. Mooij and Hofstede (2011) argue that cultural characteristics significantly influence consumers' decision-making processes, including product and service selection as well as interactions with businesses. Consequently, service design must be adapted to the cultural features of the target audience.

Regarding menu design and food presentation, despite the cuisine being Vietnamese in the pop-up restaurant at GastroBar Saimaa case, the menu's presentation and explanation of food information must be comprehensible, clear, and connected with Finnish customers' preferences. Food information can be translated into Finnish, explaining typical Vietnamese ingredients in a way that is simple to understand for Finnish individuals. Menu items must be clearly identified, including ingredients, methods of preparation, and pricing, which help customers be more confident when selecting a dish. Menus need to be categorised (starters, main dishes, desserts) and should avoid unnecessary complexity. Supplying allergy and nutritional information can help customers avoid any confusion when selecting a dish. In addition, the chef can use local ingredients rather than trying to copy original Vietnamese cuisine. Food creations can be made by combining ingredients that are accessible in Finland. Restaurants may replace traditional ingredients that are difficult to procure by developing innovative versions using flavors along with suitable methods of cooking to maintain their unique flavor.

Regarding service atmosphere and style, according to Hofstede's theory, the environment must be modified to ensure comfort for Finnish customers, focusing on seating distance and privacy. The organization must thoroughly analyse Finnish individuals (expeditious service, privacy considerations) and contrast them with Vietnamese individuals (more welcoming, intimate interactions). In restaurants, explaining the service process, such as expected waiting time or steps when ordering, can help reduce customer anxiety. Servers should communicate politely, clearly and directly, avoiding misunderstandings or creating ambiguity. When customers have questions, staff should be ready to explain in detail about food options or services.

2.3 Cross-cultural Management

2.3.1 Human Resources Management (HR Management)

Human resources management is the business process of managing staff and other people who contribute to a business (Sukanya 2018). For a restaurant, the personnel can be divided into the back of the house (kitchen staff), who are responsible for cooking, the front of the house (wait staff), who provides customer service, and the management staff that puts the whole production together. This study considers the marketing team to be part of the management staff. All of these elements have to work together to both design and implement the service offering for the restaurant, to ensure a good customer experience. (O'Neill et al. 2024.)

Human resources can be managed in different ways. Some organizations take a very hierarchical approach, with clear chains of command and authority. Other operations are flatter, giving the front-line members of the team more authority to make decisions. (Leong 2019.) These are examples of different management styles where companies can have a power culture, with a focus on the boss; a role culture, with a focus on bureaucracy; a task culture, which is focused on tasks; or an individual culture, which emphasizes each individual (Bhattacharyya 2010).

According to Bhattacharyya (2010), one important element of human resources management is employee satisfaction, which can be improved by setting appropriate expectations for the staff and how the work progresses. Efficient human resources management ensures transparent communication among various staff members and functions (Thomas and Peterson 2018). Another way of understanding employee satisfaction is by looking at employee motivation. Employees from different cultures can be motivated by different aspects of the job. Some employees, for example, may be more motivated by job security, whereas others may be driven by internal or external motivation. (Meira 2023.)

Cross-cultural human resources management, also known as international human resources management, is important in organizations with different cultures. International team members might have different expectations or ways of doing things. This can also come down to language and communication skills and ways of communicating. Different cultures can also have different workplace expectations around autonomy, responsibility, or even simple logistics like attendance or punctuality.

International human resource management is also an important consideration when dealing with an international cuisine. The staff members may not be used to cooking food in the style of the menu, and may need additional training or guidance so that they can learn how to prepare the dishes. They may also be unfamiliar with specific ingredients or cooking methods, which can increase the time required for training. Lastly, the international team members might not know how the food is supposed to taste, which places a higher burden on the management staff for quality control.

2.3.2 Kitchen Management

The kitchen is the back of the house (O'Neill et al. 2024). Managing a kitchen requires inventory control and other supply chain management, making sure that the right equipment is available, and making sure that the restaurant staff knows how to use the equipment (Mutlu et al. 2022). If staff abilities are not considered when the restaurant plans its menu, the execution will be poor and the customer experience will suffer (Kivela 2003). Profitability requires looking at the amount of ingredients required and the staff time required, and is negatively influenced by food waste or other costs.

Training the restaurant staff is one way to avoid a restaurant that is not profitable. Having experienced staff members is another way (Goeltom et al. 2024). It is also important to maintain staff morale so that they feel that they are treated well and can perform well (Mutlu et al. 2022).

One of the challenges for a restaurant with international cuisine is that the people working in the restaurant may not have experience with the menu items, even if they are skilled (Goeltom et al. 2024). International cuisine might also require ingredients that are unfamiliar to the staff. For instance, European kitchens do not usually use the umami that is common in Asian cooking. (Curtis 2009.) If the staff members are not familiar with the food, they may produce more food waste and increase costs.

3 Presentation of Possible Case Company/Organization

GastroBar Saimaa represents an innovative educational approach located on the campus of LAB University in Lappeenranta, Finland. It provides students pursuing degrees in tourism and hospitality management at LAB an opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge in real-world settings. LAB has many courses that include practical work, such as Restaurant Functions, Hospitality Management, Marriage of Food and Wine, International Cuisine, etc. GastroBar functions as a transient dining establishment, with themes that frequently evolve, ensuring a novel experience. Students can acquire practical experience in various domains, including culinary arts, customer service, and bar management, at these pop-up events.

At first, students get to know the theory of the course, and then they have the opportunity to organize some pop-up restaurant events during their studies, fine dining style. With a professional kitchen and a fully equipped bar, students are given space to experiment with new things under the supervision of Chef Jukka and Miss Ann-Marie, the heads of GastroBar Saimaa. The restaurant, most of the time, is run by students during operation time in every pop-up.

The concept of GastroBar Saimaa originated from the "learning by doing" approach, wherein students collaboratively design and execute themed events. This experiential approach enhances students' technical skills, such as culinary abilities, as well as interpersonal skills, including collaboration and leadership. The restaurant offers both uncomplicated café-style dishes and intricate three-course meals meticulously prepared by the students. GastroBar Saimaa mainly focuses on education, yet it also provides a distinctive dining experience by integrating creativity and innovation into its hospitality services. Every pop-up is planned ahead of time, depending on the timeline of the course. Students brainstorm the pop-up's theme, food and drinks menu, and decorations that enhance the main idea and then split up into smaller groups to work on different tasks, which are in the kitchen, in the restaurant, bar and the marketing team.

On the other hand, GastroBar Saimaa also offers catering services for those who want to experience high-quality services with a reasonable financial plan. One of the most exciting events is usually a catering event for International guests of LAB or LUT; this is when LAB can show their special programme.

4 Report on The Implemented Work

The GastroBar pop-up restaurant concept has become popular in Lappeenranta for its ability to create unique, temporary culinary experiences that combine different culinary cultures. This report outlines the initial planning stages for a multicultural pop-up restaurant that aims to combine Vietnamese flavors with Finnish ingredients. The project, organized by students at LAB University of Applied Sciences, aims to provide an innovative culinary experience while promoting practical, cross-cultural learning among students in the hospitality and management fields. The main proponents of this initiative, Jukka and Ann-Marie, will provide guidance and support throughout the project. This report highlights the project's objectives, organizational structure and planned activities, with a particular focus on teamwork, communication and cross-cultural applications in the culinary arts.

4.1 Ideation

At "The 6th Love Language," we aim to redefine how love is communicated through food. The connection between culinary artistry and emotional warmth, our concept revolves around the slogan "Love at First Bite". We pour love into every detail of our dishes, crafting an experience that resonates with the heart and comforts the soul. Food is a love language! For us, who are two students living far from home, it's the most heartfelt way to express care. Every bite reminds us of the warmth and comfort of our moms' cooking, filling the void of homesickness with flavors that feel like home. Across cultures and continents, grandmothers and mothers have communicated love without words, pouring their hearts into every meal. Using their cooking skills and thoughtfully chosen ingredients, they created the cuisine of love.

The Vietnamese-Finnish pop-up restaurant project is to introduce diners to the harmony of Vietnamese and Finnish cuisine, using local Finnish ingredients combined with traditional Vietnamese spices and elements. Vietnamese cuisine is a beautiful combination of bold flavors, fresh ingredients and nutrients. Vietnam's rich culinary traditions perfectly fit our vision of warmth and care, making it the perfect choice for this pop-up event. As the weather turns colder, we have designed a menu of warming dishes and soups to create a cozy atmosphere. Ingredients such as ginger and cinnamon play a key role, not only providing flavor but also having soothing, warming properties that help guests feel comfortable and energized. Our dishes are not only about the flavor but also about health. Beef stews and tofu are rich in nutrients, creating a balance between indulgence and health. By choosing these hearty, nutritious meals, we hope to show our care for the mind, body and spirit of our guests.

In addition, we came up with the idea of harmonizing Vietnamese food with the gentle, sophisticated and elegant Finnish restaurant style. Finnish food culture often celebrates the concept of *hygge*: a cozy, warm atmosphere that promotes intimacy and relaxation. Finnish interiors are known for their simplicity and connection to nature. Neutral tones, wooden furniture and soft, natural textures create a peaceful and welcoming environment. At The 6th Love Language, we combined these elements with the lush greenery of plants as the main color, warm candlelight and rustic materials available, connecting Finnish minimalism.

4.2 Introducing Ideas To The Teams

This pop-up restaurant project not only provides a new dining experience but also a great opportunity for first-year students from different backgrounds to learn and develop practical skills in hospitality management. Through participating in the project, students can apply theoretical knowledge to practise, while practising teamwork skills in a formula-filled and creative environment. The pop-up restaurant serves as a practice platform, helping first-year student members from home countries such as Vietnam, Finland, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal to integrate, work together and face real-life challenges in the hospitality industry. This is a valuable opportunity to prepare students for the future game, especially as the industry becomes increasingly globalized.

To manage and support the student members in the project, we introduced ourselves in an applicable way, communicated positive energy, and encouraged student members to participate in giving constructive feedback. In addition, we also shared our expectations when working together: responsibility, desire to learn, support, presence, engagement, open communication, transparency, and mutual respect. This helped create a good collaborative atmosphere where everyone felt respected and had the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

During introducing ideas, we also shared about the common working process in three main areas: kitchen, restaurant, and marketing. The students were analyzed for specific tasks and prepared for the trial day. Students were divided into three separate teams, each of which would take on a specific task in organizing and running the pop-up event. They chose their own groups based on their interests and abilities, which helped each person feel more excited and dedicated to the assigned work. The workflow of each department was introduced and specifically instructed before the event took place, helping students understand their roles and work effectively together in a real-life environment. Splitting the tasks equally among the staff was mentioned. They knew that everyone should contribute to the commission and give their best for the group work, that was how they could learn and collect more experience. Table 1

below shows how the food preparation work was organized into different tasks, each with a due date and assigned team member. The full work breakdown structure for all tasks can be found in the appendix.

Table 1: Work Breakdown Structure Excerpt

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE		
Element	Due Date	People assigned
1. Food Preparation		
1.1 Starter		
1.2 Main Course		
1.3 Vegetarian Option		
1.4 Dessert		
1.5 Welcome Drink		
1.6 Coffee and Tea		

4.2.1 The Service Team

Four people would be responsible for decorating and preparing the restaurant space for the pop-up event. They arranged tables, chairs, decorations and lighting to make the space cozy, attractive and suitable for the pop-up theme. Also, the team prepared serving utensils, menus, and other elements to ensure a comfortable dining experience for customers. In addition to preparation work, this team would be involved in serving customers and working in bars throughout the event.

4.2.2 The Marketing Team

The marketing team could have two main people in charge. Their work included designing promotional materials such as posters, flyers, and promotional content to attract customers to the event, managing and updating social media platforms. The marketing team would ensure that information about the pop-up is updated and promoted on various social media platforms such as Facebook, and Instagram.

4.2.3 The Kitchen Team

The kitchen team had a total of eight people. They were divided into three small groups. Two students will be in charge of starters. This group prepared vegetables and cooked special appetizers, ensuring that each dish met the standards of taste and decoration. Four people were responsible for preparing the main dishes, ensuring that dishes were cooked according to the recipe and served on time. Two people working in desserts would prepare desserts, creating interesting and easy-to-serve dishes. All the team members would take care of the cleaning up during and after cooking. They learned that everyone should clean up after themselves and help their teammates when needed.

4.3 Tryout Day

The pop-up restaurant trial day was an important step in the event preparation process, where students tested recipes and adjusted service procedures. On this day, the service, marketing, and kitchen teams worked together to prepare for the event while also facing a number of cross-cultural management challenges. Teams practiced and improved their service skills, designed the space, created marketing content, and tested recipes. Additionally, issues such as understanding food allergies, using culturally specific ingredients, and sustainable principles in reducing food waste were addressed to enhance the effectiveness and integrity of the pop-up event.

4.3.1 The Service Team

The main tasks of the service team are taking care of the bar and providing customer-facing services in the front of the pop-up. On the try-out day, the main activities for the service team were practicing waiting skills and tweaking the welcome drink. The service team also brainstormed decorations and the layout of the tables in the restaurant space.

There were several cross-cultural management issues that we encountered during that day. First, it was clear that some team members were unfamiliar with allergies because they came from cultures where they were not as strongly recognized. We addressed this by repetition, reminding the participants at several points that they needed to understand customer allergies.

The tryout day was also the first time that the service team was working on the project together. We used the opportunity to understand how everyone worked together and create our management style for the pop-up. We decided to give the service team the freedom to

iterate the welcome drink under their own authority. The service team responded by taking the task seriously and contributing to the pop-up service design actively.

4.3.2 The Marketing Team

The marketing team spent the demo day focusing on creating engaging marketing materials for the pop-up restaurant. One of the team's key tasks was to create a slideshow for the TV screens in the restaurant space, helping to convey information about the event and highlighting the customer experience. At the same time, they took photos and videos to use as promotional materials for media channels and for subsequent campaigns. In addition, the marketing team was also responsible for the music that was played throughout the pop-up. Choosing the right music was an important factor in creating a space that would make customers feel comfortable and enhance the experience at the restaurant. They chose music that matched the atmosphere of the event and the style of the restaurant, ensuring that the music not only served as a backdrop to the space but also contributed to creating a special atmosphere for the event.

The marketing team's management style places a strong emphasis on sharing clear goals and detailed visions for both service design and marketing materials. These goals are not only related to completing specific tasks such as designing images, videos or music, but also help the team understand the overall strategy of the event. Analysing and sharing goals helps the team understand their role in the big picture, thereby finding the best way to achieve these goals effectively. Sharing a clear vision created consensus within the team, making it easier for members to coordinate and contribute ideas. The team worked based on assigned tasks and took the initiative to come up with initiatives, thereby improving the quality of work and ensuring that marketing materials were completed on schedule. The ideas and real contributions of each member created a synchronized and effective marketing plan for the pop-up event.

4.3.3 The Kitchen Team

The main goal of the tryout day for the kitchen team is to test the recipes and develop the team members' skills required to cook the dishes. We also reviewed how to clean the kitchen and how to use the industrial appliances that are found there. Most of the students had never been in a restaurant kitchen before and were confused about how to use the equipment. We also noted that they were, in general, freaking out as if their lack of knowledge was a failure. We realize that, in our country, the university environment is confrontational. We have learned from our time at LAB that new experiences are just learning opportunities, but these first-year

students probably have not had the time to learn that themselves. We addressed this cultural gap by calmly explaining that the whole purpose of the try-out day was to learn all of these things and practice. This led the students to calm down and follow Chef's instructions, as well as ours, figuring out how to use the equipment in the process.

The kitchen team also had to deal with cross-cultural service design issues. The dessert called for glutenous rice flour, which is a staple of Vietnamese cooking. Although the ingredient is technically available in Finland, it is not commonly used or known. We accidentally procured the wrong type of rice flour and the sticky rice balls dessert did not come out right. It turned out that the dessert team was entirely Vietnamese and, thus very aware that things were not going the right way.

One other cultural issue that came up during the tryout day was related to food waste. In Finland, we weigh our food waste in order to keep track of consumption. We also used carrot and parsnip skins as a garnish to reduce food waste. This was new for most of the students because they had never seen these types of sustainability principles outside of the classroom.

4.4 Prewrite Day

A preparation day occurs the day prior to the pop-up event to guarantee that all final arrangements for the main event are completed smoothly and efficiently. This day is essential to the success of the upcoming event. Activities generally include detailed food preparation, including chopping, marinating, and arranging ingredients, and careful organization of the dining area to provide an inviting ambience. By the end of the preparation day, all elements should be in place, allowing the team to focus fully on executing the event without distractions.

4.4.1 In The Front

The restaurant creation process includes not only interior decoration but also involves tasks related to seating arrangements, table arrangements, cleaning, customer service and marketing efforts. The first task when preparing a restaurant is to arrange tables to suit different group sizes, in this pop-up we have arranged tables for 8, 6, 4 and 2 people. For a group of eight customers, two rectangular tables combined together are ideal, while for a smaller group of six, a circular table arrangement is more suitable to create a cozy atmosphere. Reasonable distance between tables is also important to maintain comfortable movement for both customers and staff. Next, students cleaned and disinfected the table, which is essential to ensure that hygiene standards are met, and the area around the table, including the floor, must be swept and mopped to create a clean environment.

After cleaning, the next task is to add decorative elements that enhance the overall aesthetics of the restaurant. Students dressed the dining table, placing decorative items in the center of the table, such as small vases, candles, and lamps to create a gentle atmosphere. Adjusting the lighting is equally important in setting up a romantic atmosphere. In addition, students need to prepare the dining utensils. Glassware must be polished to ensure a clean surface, while cutlery must be placed in the correct order according to the dishes in the meal. For example, the order of spoons, knives, and forks must be convenient in the order of use, the knife side must face the fork. Water glasses must be placed above the dessert spoons and forks. Students were given practice pouring water, carrying dishes, and wiping tables. It is important to train staff to handle these tasks effectively. This includes pouring water without spilling, carrying dishes to the correct table, and wiping tables properly after each course. Tasks were practiced in advance so that staff could perform them seamlessly, ensuring a smooth dining experience for customers. Students have also been given the role of welcoming guests. When guests arrived, the cashier area was responsible for collecting money and guiding guests to the dining area, ensuring there was no confusion.

The marketing team had a crucial role in creating the right ambience and engagement with the audience. The team began by selecting an appropriate music playlist to match the event's tone, making sure the audio equipment was working properly. Additionally, the marketing team must prepare screens with visuals. The photo booth area was another vital task. The marketing team must find an accessible area, decorate it with the appropriate backdrop, and ensure there is space for guests to enjoy taking pictures. Social media plays an important role as well, and the team should actively post-event highlights or updates to engage with the audience online. To enhance the guest experience, print materials like name tags, menus, and reservation confirmations must be prepared. These printed items help guests feel welcome and organized, providing them with the information they need during their dining experience. The menus should reflect the restaurant's offerings, name tags help staff identify guests if necessary. In addition, the marketing team was also responsible for printing menus and employee name tags to make serving more professional.

4.4.2 In The Kitchen

During the pre-event preparation day, the team had the opportunity to work through some of the issues that arose during the trial period. Although there were a few issues, we learned from our mistakes and improved our workflow, which helped things run more smoothly on the main event day. By this time, the kitchen team members felt more comfortable and confident working in the kitchen, familiar with the recipes and cooking process. One of the major

improvements was the procurement of the correct glutinous rice flour needed, which helped the final dessert come out as planned.

A cultural issue also arose during the pre-event preparation day when we noticed the differences in the use of coriander in different regions. To suit the taste and characteristics of the dish, the team decided to replace the parsley with Vietnamese coriander for the appetizer and adjust the vegetable broth to better suit the Vietnamese culinary style. This is a great example of applying flexibility and cultural understanding to improve the quality of the food.

To keep the team motivated and focused on the task, we created a check-list to ensure that all the preparations were done properly. However, there was a slight oversight in the preparation when the vegetarian appetizer was left off the list. However, thanks to the effective cooperation and thorough preparation of the kitchen team, we still had enough time to complete the remaining tasks and ensure everything was ready in time for the event.

4.5 Main Day

The main day of the pop-up restaurant is actually the most important event in the organization, when 49 paying customers are served a carefully planned three-course menu. Although the menu and space are pre-designed, the focus of the day is on food preparation and staff management to ensure everything runs smoothly and adheres to the set plan. On this day, the manager must supervise and coordinate all departments, from the kitchen team, service team to the marketing team, to ensure that all tasks are completed on schedule and with quality. The staff needs to perform their jobs efficiently and professionally, ensuring that customers have a great experience. Staff management also includes dealing with unexpected situations such as service incidents or customer dissatisfaction, so as not to disrupt the service process.

In addition, the marketing team also plays an important role in maintaining the event atmosphere, ensuring that the restaurant space is always vibrant and customers feel comfortable. Activities such as music, photo and video projections need to be controlled to make the space cozy and suitable for the theme of the evening. Everything needs to run smoothly, and coordination between the teams will determine the success of the pop-up day. The three-course menu, carefully prepared in advance, needs to be served on time and according to the quality promised.

4.5.1 In The Front

One of the issues that came up was that one of the customers had a celery allergy, which is not one of the more common allergies. This was relevant because both the starter and the main dish had celery in them. The service team did a great job collecting the allergy information and communicating it to the kitchen team. We did not run into any major management issues because the service team was well prepared for the day. In fact, there was not much to do as a manager because the different team members took responsibility for their part of the operations.

The day of the pop-up restaurant was well prepared and went smoothly. Most of the decoration work was completed before the event, creating a cozy and attractive space for customers. The students were on time to check the tables and make sure everything was ready for the guests. The tables were delicately decorated with sticky notes and pencils, allowing customers to write down their names and emails if they wanted to receive sweet pictures with their loved ones. A photographer was present to capture the precious moments of the customers, and these pictures will be sent to the customers via email. In addition, to create a warm and friendly welcome, greetings were written in many languages such as Vietnamese, English, Chinese, Russian, Finnish and Spanish, and were posted at the entrance for guests to easily see.

All staff wore black uniforms to create a professional look. The Bar team had prepared welcome drinks, welcoming guests as soon as they entered. The Cashier and Staff Serving team had been thoroughly trained on how to welcome guests and process orders effectively. To ensure the work was systematic and logical, the Cashier had prepared a map of the tables with clear order numbers, noted the tables with reservations and assigned the correct tables to customers.

Each waiter was assigned specific tables to take orders, serve dishes and assist guests when needed. They were trained to take accurate orders and communicate with guests confidently and professionally. Throughout the event, the staff supported each other, ready to support other colleagues' tables to ensure all customers were served attentively, especially during peak hours when there were many guests.

In particular, throughout the service process, the staff paid close attention to the customers, always creating a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. The staff served the dishes attentively, monitoring each customer's needs, from adding water, giving more tissues, creating a comfortable space for the customers. They always smiled and maintained a friendly attitude,

making the customers feel cared for and respected. It was this careful observation and friendly attitude that contributed to creating a warm and professional atmosphere, satisfying all guests.

After the pop-up event is over, clean-up is done quickly and in an organized manner to return the space to its original state, ensuring that all items and equipment are properly maintained. The staff dismantled and stored away all the decorations such as pop-up posters, tablecloths, candles, pine cones and lights. All of these decorations were carefully packed away and stored away for future events.

After the guests left, the dining tables were wiped clean and neatly arranged. The waiters cleaned the tables, chairs and surrounding areas to leave no trace of food or drinks. Everything was arranged neatly, tidily and cleanly. In addition, the photo booth area was also removed and items such as backdrops, heart-shaped props (photo props) were cleaned up and put away in storage.

All eating utensils, including plates, cups, bowls, knives, spoons, and forks, are collected, thoroughly washed, and dried. They are then sorted and returned to their original locations in the kitchen and storage areas.

All teams are responsible for stacking the washed and dried glasses into bins and storing them in the warehouse. Beverage service equipment such as shakers, stirrers, and measuring tools are also collected, cleaned, and neatly arranged in the warehouse for storage and reuse for future events. After cleaning the area outside the restaurant, the staff went into the kitchen to assist the kitchen team in cleaning and mopping.

4.5.2 In The Kitchen

At 8:30, all the teams were ready for their job. The starter team gathered ingredients that they had prepared on the preparation day and started cooking their soup at 9 o'clock. The main course team started their job at the same time as the starter. Everything was prepared, so it didn't take long for them to put all the ingredients together and prepare the dishes. Although the main course alternative option, which is tofu stew, was not prepared on the preparation day, the team finished it first since it was quick to make. The vegetarian option of the main course was quick to make, so. The dessert team did their job smoothly with the right flour.

The kitchen team had to improvise a new recipe for the starter and main course that did not use celery. Since all of the ingredients were mixed together during the preparation day, the kitchen team decided to quickly make a set of dishes from scratch for that customer with the celery allergy. This only caused a slight delay in service. We attribute this success to the fact

that the kitchen operations were running smoothly. All of the sub-teams, each responsible for a different dish, were able to operate independently and without needing much input from the management.

5 Summary and Discussion

5.1 Summary of The Thesis Objective

The main objective of this thesis is to explore how service design and management are impacted by the international context. The focus is on the relationship between service design and cross-cultural management. The study identifies that cross-cultural management is not only an additional aspect but also an important challenge in service design, especially in the restaurant industry to ensure harmony between different cultures and optimize the customer experience in an international service environment.

5.2 Evaluate The Implementation

Despite some unfavorable comments on the drinks and food due to the gap between customers' expectations and the real creativity in combining Finnish and Vietnamese culinary cultures, especially from cultural perspectives, the overall customer experience was rated very highly. Non-food elements such as the atmosphere and service made a strong impression, helping to enhance the overall experience. Feedback showed that the majority of customers were genuinely satisfied and enjoyed their time at the pop-up restaurant.

5.2.1 Customer Feedback

- Twenty-four customers completed the feedback survey after eating at the pop-up restaurant. 84% of respondents had the meat lovers main course, while 16% had the veggie lovers.
- The welcome drink had an average rating of 4.72 stars, with one 3-star review and five 4-star reviews. One respondent said that it was too sour for their tastes.
- The starter had an average rating of 4.68 stars, with one 3-star review and six 4-star reviews.
- The main course had an average rating of 4.6 stars, with three 3-star reviews and four 4-star reviews. Two respondents commented that the rice was too mushy or compacted for their preferences.
- The dessert did not perform as well, with an average rating of 4.44 stars, with one 2-star review, two 3-star reviews, and seven 4-star reviews.
- The non-food elements of the experience had the highest ratings: Decor and ambience had an average of 4.92 stars, while the service had an average of 4.88 stars, possibly because nine respondents indicated that they waited either a bit or significantly too long to be served.

The restaurant received very positive reviews for its decor, ambience, and service. The main dishes were well priced, but the desserts and main courses had room for improvement. The restaurant needed to adjust the main courses and desserts to better suit the tastes of the customers. The welcome drink could also be adjusted in acidity to make it easier to receive. In addition, improving the service time to reduce the dampness of long waiting times would be an important factor in improving customer satisfaction.

5.2.2 Feedback from Observation

Both the Service and Kitchen teams demonstrated professionalism, team spirit and a positive attitude. Despite some limitations in details during peak hours and language barriers, the team showed great potential for growth and a willingness to learn to improve in the future.

The restaurant team demonstrated outstanding capabilities and professionalism, especially the Marketing team, as they successfully completed tasks such as designing posters and producing videos to attract customers. These media products play an important role in creating attraction and enhancing the restaurant's image. The students in the service team demonstrated their ability to work clearly, knowing what they needed to do and always maintaining close coordination and mutual support. However, since this was the first time the students supported a pop-up restaurant, they were initially a bit confused and worried. During peak hours, some wrinkles appeared, such as forgetting to serve extra chocolate to customers, not explaining the meaning of the notes left on the table to customers, and not giving QR codes for customers to provide feedback. However, their positive attitude and efforts made up for these shortcomings. The teams showed a willingness to learn and were motivated, which helped them prepare better for future pop-up events and courses. The Kitchen Team worked well thanks to good internal communication, ensuring that work was divided equally and fairly among the members. Each student had specific responsibilities but was still willing to support other teams when needed.

6 Suggestion For Further Development

6.1 Expanding Event Services

In order to create new opportunities for customers, and especially students, GastroBar Saimaa restaurant can expand its event organization services such as weddings, birthday parties, and family parties. Students will have the opportunity to experience and become familiar with professional event organization concepts. It is also an opportunity to learn about the event organization process, from planning, menu selection, to service methods.

6.2 Expanding Partnerships With Universities

GastroBar Saimaa can cooperate with different universities, creating opportunities for students from the schools to exchange, learn and interact. This not only helps the restaurant attract a potential young customer base but also creates a strong connection between the restaurant and the academic environment, thereby enhancing the reputation and community value of GastroBar Saimaa.

6.3 Multiple Events For Pop-up Team

One of the areas that was not addressed by the pop-up restaurant concept is how to respond to feedback. The team, as well as customer feedback, revealed that, for example, the rice had a poor texture. It would be an additional learning opportunity if the dishes were repeated at another time. For example, maybe the same team could host a private event that features the same dishes. This would allow an opportunity to improve the planning and execution of the menu in response to feedback, like what would happen in a regular restaurant.

6.4 Hot Counter Topping Service:

GastroBar Saimaa can implement a new service where customers can freely choose toppings for main dishes at the hot counter. After choosing, customers will pay and then sit at the table to enjoy. This service not only gives customers more flexibility in customizing their dishes but also brings an interesting personalized experience. This service can be called "Toppings Choice".

6.5 Teppanyaki At The Table:

An attractive and new idea is to implement Teppanyaki service at the table. In this service, the chef will directly prepare and perform the cooking process right at the customer's table. This is not only a unique way of serving but also brings diners a completely new culinary

experience, creating opportunities for interaction between the chef and the customer, helping to increase interaction and fun for the meal.

6.6 Better Marketing

There is a website, skinfo.dy.fi, which shares the menus of the restaurants in the campus area. The pop-up restaurant should work with this website so that when there is a pop-up, it shows up as a lunch option, which may bring more foot traffic to the restaurant.

6.7 Leverage Gastrobar Saimaa For Student Development

Gastrobar Saimaa could organize a private event with local restaurants and hotel owners. This could benefit the tourism and hospitality management program by developing relationships for field visits, guest speakers, and other participation. It would also help the students who are staffing the event by demonstrating to potential employers that they have practical and strategic skills that might be useful for their businesses. Ideally, this would be combined with other programs, such as the practical training component of the curriculum, or in combination with City of Lappeenranta incentives for hiring foreign LAB students as interns.

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Appendix 1. Work Breakdown Structure For Pop-up Restaurant

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

Element	Due Date	People assigned
1. Food Preparation		
1.1 Starter		
1.2 Main Course		
1.3 Vegetarian Option		
1.4 Dessert		
1.5 Welcome Drink		
1.6 Coffee and Tea		
2. Preparing the Dining Room		
2.1 Table Decorations		
2.2 TV Screens		
2.3 Music		
2.4 Other decorations		
3. Marketing		
3.1 Marketing material design		
3.2 Digital marketing		
4. Service at the popup		
4.1 Cashier		
4.2 Wait Staff		
5. Management		
5.1 Kitchen Management		
5.2 Dining Room Management		

Appendix 2. Checklist for Preparation Day

TASK	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME	DONE
Kitchen Team			
Team Starter	Prepare ingredients for starter.	All ingredients are ready, following the recipe and food safety standards.	
Team Main Course	Prepare ingredients for main course.	All ingredients are ready, following the recipe and food safety standards.	
Team Dessert	Prepare ingredients for dessert.	All ingredients are ready, following the recipe and food safety standards.	
Clean up the kitchen	Wipe down tables and clean the surrounding floor area.	Everything is neat and clean.	
Restaurant Team			
Set Up Tables (8, 6, 4 or 2 People)	Arrange tables according to guest group sizes, ensuring appropriate spacing.	Tables are set up neatly with the correct number of seats and proper spacing.	
Clean Tables and Chairs	Wipe down tables, chairs, and clean the surrounding floor area. Using sanitizer for surfaces.	Tables and chairs are clean and sanitized, ready for decoration.	
Decorate Tables and Chairs	Add decorations like flowers, candles, and other elements to tables and chairs (depending on themes).	Restaurant space is decorated beautifully, creating a welcoming and attractive ambiance.	
Marketing Team			
Check the Music Playlist and Screen Setup	Select the appropriate music playlist to match the event's tone.	Music is selected to match the event tone, and audio equipment and screens are set up properly for smooth event flow.	
	Ensure audio equipment is working properly.		
	Set up screens with any visuals or branding for a seamless experience.		

Social Media / Live Posting	Post event highlights or updates on social media.	Event moments are shared on social media, engaging the audience and keeping them updated in real-time.	
Print Menu	Print the menu for the event.	Menus are printed and available for guests to view during the event.	
Bar Team			
Welcome Drink Preparation	Prepare ingredients and arrange glasses for welcome drinks.	Ingredients for welcome drinks are prepared, and glasses are ready for serving guests as they arrive.	
Water Bottles Setup	Set up bottled water for guests.	Bottled water is arranged and ready for guest service.	
Cleaning in Bar	Clean dishes, glasses, and cutlery in bar	All bar-related dishes, glasses, and cutlery are clean and ready for service.	
Prepare Ingredient for Welcome Drinks	Prepare ingredients for each welcome drink, ensuring guests get all the information about ingredients and allergy concerns.	Ingredient is prepared and accessible for guests to review, ensuring safety for those with allergies.	
Support Decoration Team	Assist with decorations or other tasks as needed after bar duties are completed.	Decoration tasks are supported, contributing to the overall aesthetic and preparedness of the venue.	
Team Leaders			
Oversee the Process	Monitor task progress, communicate with team members, and resolve issues.	Tasks are completed on time, and any problems are addressed efficiently	
Quality Control	Check all completed tasks to ensure they meet quality and theme standards.	All tasks meet the required standards and are ready for service.	
Confirm Task Completion	Double-check with each team member that their tasks are finished.	All tasks are done.	

Appendix 3. Checklists for Cleaning Up

Kitchen Cleaning Checklist

ELEMENT	DONE
1. Clean the counter	
2. Handwash cutting tools	
3. Wash cookware and utensil	
4. Clean all the counters' surface with sanitizer	
5. Putting cookware away	
6. Putting utensils away	
7. Putting dishes away	
8. Rinse ovens	
9. Rinse and mop the floor	
10. Take the trash out	
11. Line the bins	
12. Clean the dishwasher	
13. Turn the lights off	

Dining Room Cleaning Checklist

ELEMENT	DONE
1. Clean the tables with sanitizer	
2. Wash the glassware and bar implements	
3. Rearrange the tables (classroom set up)	
4. Putting tools away	
5. Clean the bar counter	
6. Clean coffee machine	
7. Take trash out	
8. Line the bins	
9. Turn the lights off	