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Current literature supports the importance of creating ethnic places as a mechanism in maintaining the cultural identity of immigrants. An important component of ethnicity is expressed through the manner in which ethnic groups prepare and serve their food. The inspiration behind the selection of my thesis topic was influenced by the diversity of the American population and their broad interest in international cuisine. The purpose of my thesis project was to share the beauty of my Persian ancestry with my adopted home with the development of a design concept for a contemporary Persian restaurant.

Proportionally, Iranian immigrants are relatively small in comparison to other ethnic groups. Since most Iranian immigrants congregate to larger cities where there is more diversity than rural communities, their ethnic group is less noticeable. My research topic attempts to allure Americans towards an exotic and pleasing experience of the Iranian culture.

A contemporary Persian restaurant is an unknown concept in both America and Iran. For this graduate project historic features were identified through observations and visual recordings of historic Persian coffeehouses. Interviews were conducted with first and second-generation Iranian immigrants. Focus group discussions that comprised of

graduate and undergraduate Iranian students who were enrolled at UNCG and A&T gained a collaborated insight into the perceptions of a contemporary Persian restaurant.

The information gathered generated a case study, which illustrated the framework for the prototype design of a Persian restaurant within the American lifestyle. A consistent image formed, which was adapted into various sites and spaces. Presentations for the design include plans, sketches, perspective views, and a proposed facade.

CONTEMPORARY PERSIAN RESTAURANT DESIGN IN  
NORTH CAROLINA

by

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Approved by

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## APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background and Importance of the Study**

When immigrants arrive in a new environment they are confronted with a different culture; as a result, their own cultural identity emerges (Ho, 2006). During this recognition phase, it is apparent to them that the new cultural environment is vastly different from the one they have known all their lives. Through this transitional phase, they begin to suffer from cultural shock, and while experiencing difficulties in making adjustments to their new environment, they long for the familiar. The result of these adjustments often incites new immigrants to seek out ethnic places, which are closer to their own cultural experiences; thereby, enabling them to adapt in a smoother transition, with a safer introduction towards the host culture.

Ethnic establishments are mutually beneficial for both the immigrants and local community by providing goods and services that are equally enjoyed, whereby, helping both groups gain familiarity with each other's culture, in a nonthreatening atmosphere. The final phase of acclimation results in ethnic diversity that is the foundation of the American lifestyle.

During ones childhood development, food is a learned behavior pattern of cultural symbolization. This behavior reinforces one's own basic human instinct for belonging to a community. Identifying with some activities of a nation's culture is a fundamental

component to our everyday lives (Gannon, 1994). For a diverse society such as America, it is important to understand the role ethnic food has portrayed in the daily lives of its immigrants as it demonstrates a basic part of their history, culture, and individual identity. Ethnic restaurants serve a dual purpose, not only as eating establishments, but also as “cultural ambassadors” that communicate the essence of a culture to local customers (Wood & Munoz, 2007).

Finkelstein predicted in the 1999 writing of “Rich Food: McDonald’s and Modern Life,” that by the end of 2000, “dining out is going to be a very popular behavior exhibited by a considerable majority of individuals.” Finkelstein estimated a substantial increase in the dining out habits of Americans in that they will consume two out of every three meals out of the home. In viewing society’s eating habit of today, Finkelstein was correct in his analysis. For today’s busy lifestyles, most individuals are away from home for most of the day, catching a quick bite during lunchtime, and then often after a long day’s work, not wanting to spend the time preparing a meal and with the after cleanup mess. For most Americans, going out to a restaurant in order to relax and enjoy the company of friend with a evenings meal has become a common social activity, and much more enjoyable than the hours of preparation and cleanup at home. In today’s standards with both members of the household working, the economics of disposable income for this social activity has changed the behavior expectations of family dinner.

Immigrants participate considerably to this new behavior pattern in America. Records from the U.S. Department of Commerce (IIE, 2012) indicate immigrants and

international students contribute to the U.S. economy through their expenditures such as tuition, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other living expenses. Lacina notes in his 2002 article on “Preparing International Students for a Successful Social Experience in Higher Education” that if we want to attract and keep immigrants and international students, we must focus on their needs for success in the United States. From a political perspective, this will help spread the social-economical values of the United States and foster mutual understandings throughout the world (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003). Since the United States is a multiethnic and multicultural nation, this national trend of hosting increases every year (Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). If the current market takes advantage of ethnic establishments by providing gateways towards the host culture for immigrants, this will promote international students’ desire to revisit or perhaps settle in the United States, thereby increasing contributions to the local economy (Alegre & Cladera, 2006).

Ursin relates the statistics of the United States food dollars spent away from the home in writing the “Artistic license: Creating picture-perfect restaurants,” by portraying steady increases from 25% in 1955 to 44% in 1993, and as of the 1996 writing predicts a 50% increase for 1996. When you couple this trend with Finkelstein’s prediction of Americans eating out for two out of three meals by 2000, the increase in the demand for comfortable and inviting restaurant settings are justified. Ursin points to another survey, which clearly indicates an increased awareness among people about the aesthetic quality of restaurant interiors. This research illustrates the consumers’ buying power for driving

the market towards interesting choices for the overall restaurant experience, and thereby providing opportunities into exotic escapes of another cultural experience.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study recognizes Iranian needs in the US, who experienced the pains of cultural shock and separate anxiety for the loss of their familiar surroundings. For an Iranian student the opportunity to socialize in our own simulated environment is extremely limited in the Greensboro area. Through observations and communication with other international students, from both a similar background, and of those from other backgrounds, the students who were able to assimilate smoother transitions into a successful American lifestyle, can attribute this success due to the assistance of a supported community network. America is a melting pot of ethnicity, and this diversity of culture extends into successful business ventures. Many ethnic establishments are equally represented within the immigrant population for a wide range of services and needs; however the most basic of these needs are socializing and gathering of a community for food and entertainment.

The geopolitical relationship between the United States and the Middle Eastern region is often strained and uncertain; however, gained familiarity between both ethnic groups is often more relaxed with socialization and awareness. For many years Iran has been one of the nations who wanted to gain acceptance into the world theater and increase its economic prosperity. In doing so, Iran recognized the educational opportunities for their youth to study in the United States, and with an added value, gain

awareness and acceptance within in the international community. Due to the lag in immigration to the United States, Iran is not equally represented with their own ethnic establishments, but the need to foster these community connects still exists.

Iran is strategically situated geographically within the Middle East region of where east meets west along the historically renowned Silk Road. This ancient Persian pathway to the orient connected Europe and Africa to Asia with cultural trade routes that retained a profound effect on the diversity development of Iran. Throughout its history, Iran confronted enormous changes from invasions, alterations and adaption. As a result, its cuisine has been deeply influenced as an important subdivision of its culture, of which the traditional Iranian restaurant exemplifies the population's rich cultural heritage. The traditional Iranian restaurant is an important cultural icon that closely identifies Iranians, and forms a basis by which an understanding of their values and behavior is portrayed.

The purpose of this study creates an awakening of the Iranian community through the development and design concept for a contemporary Iranian restaurant, which maintains important aspects of cultural identity of Iranian immigrants as well as the overall experience. This study will initially focus on the cultural, social, and physical characteristics of historical Iranian coffeehouses. The information gathered is used to explore design considerations in the development of a contemporary Iranian restaurant within an American community that is inspired by traditional Iranian restaurant experiences.

Objectives of the study:

- To develop a contemporary Iranian restaurant design in an urban region of the United States, using Greensboro, North Carolina as a site.
- To illustrate design solutions through design concepts, plans, and rendered perspective drawings.

### **Justification of the Study**

As an Iranian international student, new to American culture, I experience firsthand the cultural shock in the separation anxiety from my home environment. My anxiety was alleviated when I was introduced into the Iranian community of Greensboro, which consisted of a population of approximately 300 individuals, who aided me with my assimilation into my new environment. Through social interactions, my network community has expanded into other regions of North Carolina, such as Raleigh, Charlotte, Durham and Chapel Hill, with an estimated Iranian population throughout the state of more than 1000 individuals. North Carolina has a relatively low Iranian community in comparison to some larger states; such as California, with an estimated Iranian population of 500,000, and its largest community concentrations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and then San Diego, respectively. Los Angeles has such a large Iranian community concentration that the city's name is often referred to by other Iranians as "Tehran-geles," and is a stark simulation of their native capital of Tehran. Since the infamous Iranian revolution of 1979, the first exodus of Iranian citizens migrated to Los Angeles, and through network community engagements has steadily increased their



population to this region. During the 35-year passage, the Iranian people have taken root within the host community, developing a multitude of ethnic establishments filled with community centers, businesses, and eateries.

In comparison, the Iranian community in Greensboro is a relatively small population and unknown group, without any ethnic establishments of their own. Among the 300 Iranians living in Greensboro, approximately 30 are students studying at UNCG or A&T State University. Without their own establishments, it is impossible for them to gather as a community, share experiences, or celebrate famous events, such as the Persian New Year, known in Iranian as Norooz, and Yalda Night, the Persian winter solstice. This impediment necessitates the community organizers to make arrangements in neighboring cities that may not be easily accessible by all its members. Often new students with limited resources bear the brunt of this hindrance, increasing their separation anxiety, and often hindering their educational goals with increased depression.

With this study, I hope to encourage enlightenment for the Iranian community as to the possibilities of establishing an ethnic restaurant for social gatherings as a way to assimilate within the vibrant landscape of the existing culture of the Greensboro community, while providing an opportunity for Americans to experience and enjoy Iranian unique cultural heritage.

## **Structure of the Study**

This thesis is comprised of four chapters. Chapter 1 contains a general description and background, including the importance of the study, purpose of the study, its justification, and structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews literature pertaining to the topics addressed throughout this thesis. Chapter 3 discusses this study's research methods. Chapter 4 presents conclusions, and makes recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature reviewed for this project concentrates on areas related to the subject. These areas include: research on food and culture, current food culture in the United States, ethnic restaurants, and an introduction of Persian restaurants.

#### **Food and Culture**

According to Mavondo, “culture is a set of implicitly understood rules, which inform its members on how and what to do under different undefined situations” (Mavondo 2003); however, culture is more than just a set of rules, it takes root in the form of human behavior patterns as “a collection of beliefs, habits and traditions, shared by a group of people and learned by people who enter the society” (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Sharing a cultural bond is expressed among members of that group through music, dance, food choices and its preparation (Chong, 2006; Mason, 2003; Schouten, 2007). As Jacoby & Olson state, “food and the respective priorities of people could be influenced by their cultural origin” (1971). In this respect, the value of achieving a true understanding about culture in relationship with food would be highlighted.

According to Anderson, “people should consume food not only for its nutritional value, but to also satisfy their needs beyond those for simple nutrients” (2005). Food is used to intercommunicate and to certify religious faith. Wright observed the cultural link

of food as trade developed between nations, for example, the spice trade of the East Indies and South East Asia with the western world (2001). The culinary factors of one culture to another are more far reaching than many people imagine (Morgan, 2006). Civitello writes about the important relationship between food and culture is expressed by claiming that not every type of food is consumed by everyone on earth, and it is the “Culture” of an area that directs all the food related behaviors of people (2008). Therefore, respect and understanding are key factors in ensuring success towards cross-cultural communication.

Recent attention has been paid to studies of food researchers and scholars that address the relationship of food to different cultures. Many aspects of food preparation and its consumption are connected with the culture of individuals who apply for food related roles in society. Food is linked to social status through artistry and advertising. Our culture reinforces this perception of how food should look and taste.

Each nation has its own cultural roots, along with its traditions and beliefs that are united into one identity. This cultural heritage forms a behavior pattern unique under various circumstances. Every nation could exchange their culture through their traditions, music, and food.

Mahdi writes about the traditional food and culture of Iran in *Culture and Customs of Iran*:

Sharing food is an important mechanism of socialization and social bonding. A traditional proverb states that a way to win someone's favor is to share your food with him or her: "namakgir kardan", which means "having someone to have a taste of the salt in your food" (i.e., to become bound by hospitality). Food is not an end itself but a means of family solidarity and social exchange, especially in the traditional world of the past when families were extended and eating was a communal affair within the extended family.

Therefore, Food does not have only nutritional value but also it has an important role in representing one culture. Moreover, the way it is prepared and consumed, always has an important role as a cultural link between different societies.

## **The Analysis of Current Food Culture in the United States**

### ***Ethnic Restaurants***

The United States is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. This national diversity is, more than ever before, expected to increase because cuisines of minority populations have made an impact on the tastes diversity of the nation (Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). Oliver wrote about the cultural diversity in the United States and the impact it has had on the food industry in the *Journal of Marketing*: "One reflection of this cultural and ethnic diversity is the variety and prosperity of ethnic restaurants in the American foodservice industry and many ethnic foods have made a permanent mark on American menus" (Oliver 1999). It is estimated that more than one million immigrants arrive into the United States each year. This

diversity in the American population, as it occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has resulted in a positive impact on the American market for cuisines and ethnic restaurants (Mills, 2000). Therefore, consumer acceptance and interest of ethnic cuisines continues to increase; this reflects the expanding pluralistic composition of the contemporary society of the United States (Crest, 1997). An increase in the interest in ethnic foods is a reflection of changing cultures of consumers, which is a direct result of contact between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Iqbal, 1996). The expanding cultural diversity of the United States is indeed influencing American's taste in ethnic foods (Papadopoulos, 1997). Since the ethnic populations of the United States continues to increase, so does the demand for ethnic cuisine, as many Americans are exposed to new food choices from around the world (Hensley & Bohm, 2000; Howell, 2005). Over half of Americans surveyed in Hensley & Bohm's study of "International Cuisine Reaches America's Main Street," have shown Americans frequently choosing to eat ethnic foods, indicating that 90% are familiar with different types of ethnic food choices (Hensley & Bohm 2000).

One of the main trends in the restaurant industry today is an increase in the number of ethnic restaurants. During the past 11 years, Mexican, Italian, and Chinese cuisines have become increasingly popular, so much so that they are now considered mainstream in American culture (Hensley & Bohm, 2000). In the past, ethnic restaurants have grown significantly in the United States among the foodservice industry. By the 1980s, ethnic restaurants accounted for 10% of all restaurants in the United States (Gabaccia, 1998). Their market share has increased to 33% by 1997, generating \$29.5 billion in annual sales in the United States (Ebster & Guist, 2004). In 2005, ethnic

restaurants had generated sales of \$48.75 billion, a trend that is expected to continually increase over the next few decades (Euromonitor International, 2006). For many customers, ethnic restaurants are their only contact with foreign cultures, and because of this fact, authentic food and atmosphere are fundamental expectations for ethnic restaurants (Finkelstein, 1999). Therefore, authenticity can be an important attribute within the ethnic restaurant sector in order to achieve these goals (Cobe, 2004; Wood & Munoz, 2007).

Americans are increasingly going to ethnic restaurants for entertainment, and to relieve their busy schedules. According to Mintel's consumer survey, 84% of Americans had consumed at least one ethnic meal within the past month (Mintel Oxygen Reports, 2009). Ethnic restaurants in the host destination serve as a valuable resource that can provide immigrants a sense of belonging as they find similarities with their cultural identity and acceptance into a new environment (Shirikian, 2006). In contrast, when individuals lack a sense of belonging, they begin to have symptoms of anxiety and depression that are associated with cultural shock (Sandhu et al., 1996). It has been stated by Keyes and Kane (2004) that individuals will experience belonging and security when they are with people of a similar cultural background.

Ethnic places increase certain lifestyles and cultures, encouraging people who have a similar cultural identity to get together and support each other (Grunewald, 2002). When immigrants experience discomfort from being in an unfamiliar environment, they have a desire to identify with an ethnic place in order to strengthen their own cultural

identity similar to their home environment (Kaya, 2005). Therefore, having ethnic places would help immigrants create a sense of pride pertaining to their own cultural identity, and in preserving their own culture provide moments of escape from the host culture (Besculides et al., 2002; Tse, 1999; Chacko, 2003).

### ***Movements of Ethnic Cuisines in the United States***

Multiculturalism is an inherent part of the historical foundation and expansion of the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data there are 303 different languages spoken in the United States among various ethnic groups. In addition to the immigrant population there are an increasingly amount of international students attending American universities, thousands of foreign business travelers, and millions of aliens workers of American companies. The United States has an ever-expanding amount of international visitors from all over the world remaining in the country, with no indication of a decrease in this trend for the foreseeable future. As a multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic country, the United States is a model for the rest of the world. As newcomers attempt to simulate an environment similar to their own countries into some aspects of their lives, they can share a common link in an American setting for ethnic cuisine.

When Italians came to the United States they brought their ethnic food of pasta and pizza, and over the years, this staple has become fully integrated into the American diet. Today's Americans are more willing to try new things and are open to new flavors (Macey 2001).



According to the National Restaurant Association 2004 report, annual sales for the United States restaurant industry predicts sales will reach \$440.1 billion and is expected to continue to grow. In 1999, \$2,116.00 was spent on food away from home by the average American household while each person individually spent around \$846.00. These numbers demonstrate people are dining out more with projected sales continuing from 2003-2004 of 4.6 percentages.

This indication of people wanting to spend money for entertainment and experiences for families who have more income, are more willing to enjoy spending money on dining out (National Restaurant Association, 2003). Today's Americans have become more attracted by ethnic foods, seeing International restaurants as becoming more popular to the general public, thereby causing an increase in ethnic restaurants to open every year. In the past, ethnic restaurants were intended to provide a needed service to the people of their own cultural background; however, today Americans are more accepting of international cuisines.

### **Restaurant Design**

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) reports that the restaurant industry is the third largest of all businesses in the United States (Cetron, Demicco & Williams, 1996). Restaurants are often not only a place to eat but also provide a service for their guests to conduct recreational meetings (Satler, 2003; Kopec, 2006). The general public is looking for entertaining places along with historical themes to increase their dining experiences (Hammakar, 2000). A design niche for ethnic restaurant that portray a sense

of authenticity is in increasing demand. Researchers have expressed that the restaurant's decorum (e.g., ceiling and wall decor, furniture, flooring, plants and flowers, paints and pictures, and etc.) rank the highest of customer's prevalence and loyalty (Han & Ryn, 2009). Therefore, it is suggested within the industry to allocate expenses for attractive design features and decorum into the physical dining environment (Han & Ryn, 2009). The overall environmental design style is influence upon the customers' expectations and their actual behavior within a restaurant (Kopec, 2006). Kopec's research has indicated:

An elegance appointed restaurant (e.g., dark woods, subtle illumination and music, rich fabric, colors, table settings, and artwork) becomes a behavior setting in which customers expect a more sophisticated level of fare, and atmosphere than that of an eatery incorporating bright lights and colors, inexpensive place settings, and louder, faster-paced music.

Other factors associated with a successful restaurant design include a selection of table combinations with different sizes. Generally, a restaurant with an inappropriate mix of tables for different party sizes, maybe more accommodating if the tables have the ability to be combined and broken apart accordingly (Thompson, 2002). Robson has also reported " individuals are more likely to choose a table that offers more anchors and thus more visual screening in situations that are likely to produce stress, and that there is a difference in response between men and women as the degree of stress increases" (2008). A survey on spending per minute in a different restaurant seating also indicated that booths generated the highest SPM (spending per minute) among all the other seating types and are preferred more by customers (Kims&Robson, 2004). It also suggested that limiting visual distraction by arranging tables at angles to each other for redirecting sight

lines away from others tables (Baraban & Durocher, 2001, Kims&Robson, 2004).

Providing proper privacy and control over the environment is known to be an important factor for reducing individual's stress. In providing the users of the space with different seating choices, as well as privacy, with the use of architectural features, an increase in their level of control leads to a decrease in their degree of stress (Robson, p. 376).

Researches have also given attention to the exterior environment of restaurants, which aim to inform the customers about the restaurant and its services. Entrances, convenient drop-offs, and a waiting area, are reported as influential factors (Robson, 1999). In Phillips writing of 'An Approach to Design a Stimulating Restaurant, he has paid special attention to the importance of color relative to the build environment and its users (2009). Phillips stated the influence of color in judging an unfamiliar cafe or restaurant, as well as the importance of understanding the culture of a place, is in choosing colors. Color and lighting are closely related in that color need to be chosen in concordance with lighting (Baraban & Durocher, 2001). Colors have an effect on appetite, and it is the illumination of that color that draws us into a restaurant. In return, the color stimulates our senses with added excitement and drama upon a space, evoking various moods (Peretti, 1977).

### **The Introduction and Effect of Coffee Houses in Iran**

The traditional Iranian restaurant developed as an extension from the male-oriented gatherings in local coffeehouses for conversation and an exchange of ideas. These coffeehouses were exclusive of women, where men participated in social activities,

such as smoking the Hookah for tobacco. The earliest Persian coffeehouses were established during the Safavied era, with the initial ones built in Qazvin during the reign of Shah Tahmasb in 1523 – 1576. The tradition of the coffeehouse establishment expanded into Isfahan under the Shah Abbas reign in 1587 - 1628. Coffeehouses, as its name indicated, was originally a place for drinking coffee; however, with the introduction of tea to Iran from Turkey in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, tea was then cultivated in the Northern regions of the country, and became widely accepted among the masses. Gradually, brewed tea replaced coffee for the beverage of choice in the coffeehouses, but the cultural name was retained.

In the Qajar era, especially Naser al-din Shah's reign during 1847 - 1896, conditions became ripe for expansion of coffeehouses in Tehran and other major cities. Coffeehouse initially appeared in Bazars, the local market places, with high volume of merchant traffic of bakeries, grocery shops, public baths, and the butcher, which together formed a neighborhood community. This new enterprise grew with wide spread acceptance of society, and became a familiar sight within all city neighborhoods, thereby expanding into areas of transit, Inns, and factories, and ultimately, as rest stops between cities. The Coffeehouse grew in such popularity that, in many cases, competing houses were adjacent to one another.

During the five hundred years history of the coffeehouses, and depending upon the social and economic conditions of its time, its presence has played a variety of roles. From what began as a gathering place for pleasure seekers for the upper classes, was later

joined by poets, literati and the elites of government, military and court. Taking root in society and expanding throughout cities, the coffeehouse was embraced in general, by all classes, and in particular, with growing participation among workers and tradesmen. Gradually, each guild association gravitated towards a particular coffeehouse to assemble, becoming a familiar haunt for all tradesmen, artists, craftsmen, and businessmen. During this time, each type of coffeehouse represented an active guild unit in urban society, and developed into institutions with certain cultural and social functions.

In the past, Iranians most highly regarded physical training and mental development as the two most important educational principles. These principals of mental and physical strength, manifested by heroic behavior and virtues on a material and spiritual level, were greatly valued by the masses. The "Zurkhaneh" (the Persian House of Strength) was deemed a sacred institution for strengthening the body, enchanting the soul and upholding the moral values. After the people's acceptance of the coffee houses, the Zurkhanehes, along with the coffee houses, there became two contiguous institutions that reinforced religion and national morale into the character of society. The coffee house and Zurkhaneh's atmosphere was filled with the soul of bravery, chivalry, sacrifice and heroism. Images of mythological, epical, national and religious heroes, as well as mythical and historical kings covered the walls of Zurkhanehs and coffee houses. Sitting on the "Sardam" (rostrum or platform) of Zurkhaneh, the "morshid," (athletes' guide by reciting epic poems and hailing conductive blows on his drum), would recite heroic stories from Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh" (the Epic of the kings). Coffee - houses' "naqqal" (storyteller), just as morshid, retold patriotic and religious stories.



Figure 2.1. Painting of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Persian Epic of the Kings, by the Persian poet Ferdowsi. It tells the tragic story of the heroes Rostam and his son, Sohrab.  
Source: <http://www.google.com>

Coffee houses and Zurkhaneh patrons were all from masses, and particularly, from the common working people. Tanners, Painters, shoemakers, bakers, carpenters, locksmiths, blacksmiths, tailor etc., were among the craftsmen that attended these two institutions. Men in the Zurkhaneh built their physiques with exercise and their souls were filled with ethics of chivalry. In the coffee house, they were exposed to poetry and retelling of Rostam's battles with champions such as Sohrab and Esfandiar from Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh" (the Epic of the kings).

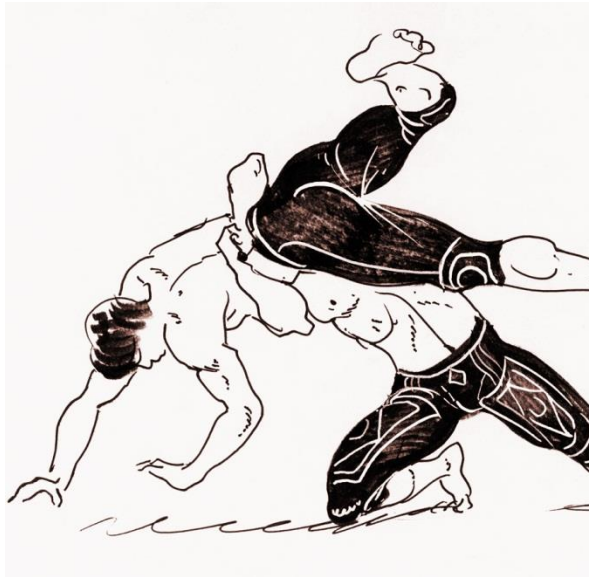


Figure 2.2. Zurkhaneh the Iranian House of Strength, by D. Burdick, PhD., S. Daneshgar, PhD. & J. Wolske. Source: *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, Vol. 13 No. 1 (2004): 26 pages.

Some coffee houses were run by ex - champions of Zurkhaneh and members of gnostic organizations, or those who were too old, and not able to compete any longer. A number of Naqqals, Sokhanvar (orators) and reciters of Shahnameh, who performed in the coffee house, belonged to Dervishes orders, and "Sils ila Faqr" (chain of poverty). Some were Zurkhaneh champions, but most were tradesmen. As a result, both Zurkhaneh and coffee house together promoted sportsmanship, heroism, and the character of manliness of traditional Iranian society.

## **Social Activities in the Coffee Houses**

The coffee house brought a change in the gathering of people; by transforming the way people entertained or spent their leisure time. After work or at leisure, men of various strata, in addition to people from all walks of life, gathered in the coffee houses to exchange their views on social, economic and political issues.

Tradesmen and artisans of a particular guild made certain coffee houses their own haunts, and during their gatherings discussed matters relevant to their jobs and guilds. Often many problems were solved with the discussion of financial difficulties, neighborhood and family issues. Traditions of oratory, poetry, threnody, recital of Shahnameh and coffee house games were at their peak in the evenings, especially during "Ramadan" (the month of fasting). People from different neighborhoods attended a friendly coffee house atmosphere, in which literary and cultural exchanges took place. It was in this system that coffee houses were transformed into a socio-cultural institution, and further became schools for nurturing artistic and literary talents, filtering traditional culture and folk literature into the masses.

In the institution of coffee houses, two important schools of verbal and visual arts, meaning Naqqali and oratory (verbal art) and painting (visual art), grew and flourished. In each of these arts, the great artists were trained.

Naqqali, oratory and painting in coffee houses thrived, to the extent that many of the literary and artistic talents were absorbed into these fields. Coffee house orators organized poetry meetings. Naqqals through their Shahnameh recitals and painters by



paintings of epic and religious heroes with historical and mythological events played an important role in acquainting the folks with Iranian literature and their cultural heritage from ancient Persia to Islamic periods. It was only a few decades ago, coffee houses had kept these memories alive among the masses.

As long as Naqqals, painters and orators existed, they acted as the strong communicative means in Iranian traditional society. Furthermore, they attempted to protect and make firm the chain of historical cultural links through the spread of ethnic knowledge through the generations. Since the expansion of business, industrial and cultural relations between Iran and foreign countries, and in particular European nations, the introduction of audio and video communicative systems in urban society lead to the use of radio and television in the coffee houses. These transformations ultimately lead to the downfall of this institution's value and prestige.

It was only a few decades ago that the coffee houses were focal points for the diffusion and promotion of traditional culture, literature and artistic heritage of Iranian forbearers. Although, the coffee house had an important role in systemizing social relations and group beliefs, the surviving Iranian values for all classes, and in particular the urban population, were slowly transformed into a place for rest, the drinking of tea and having breakfast and lunch.

At the present time, the coffee house has lost its values and has broken with its cultural links from the past, and the past generations. Orators of great talent and well versed in poetry, skillful painters, mellifluous reciters of Shahnameh and the storytelling Naqqals, who are all agents of ancient culture and art, have been thrown out of this institution. Consequently, the coffee house has turned into a unit without an identity, severed from its past social and cultural values. Today, most coffee houses have become stands for eating, drinking, and smoking without any special interior design, decoration, and paintings that had existed in the past.

### **Architectural and Interior Design of the Coffee Houses**

The architecture of the coffee houses in Iran did not have special patterns associated with its 500-year history. The exterior and the interior of the coffee houses were varied depending upon people's need, and the culture in different cities. The interiors were usually decorated with brick, stone, plaster, and tile. Persian carpets were used for covering the floors, and ceramics with painting of their heroes varnished from the wall surfaces.

### *The Use of Persian Carpets*

The art of carpet weaving has its roots in the culture and customs of the Iranian people that contains their instinctive feelings. The Iranian carpet is similar to the Persian garden: full of florae, birds, and beasts. The colors are usually made from wild flowers, and are rich in colors choices, such as burgundy, navy blue, with accents of ivory (Edwards, 1953). Persian carpets are used as floor coverings to display a welcome environment for the people while they enjoy spending their time at the coffee houses.



Figure 2.3. Persian Carpet. Source: <http://www.google.com>

### *The Use of Ceramics and Tiles*

The prominent archeologist, Roman Ghirshman, believes “the taste and talent of Iranians can be seen through the designs of their earthen wares.” Using Ceramics and painted tiles were very common for decorating the interiors of the coffee houses. Figure 2.4 below shows some of these decorative items.



Figure 2.4. Ceramics and Tiles used as Decoration in Coffee Houses.

Source: <http://www.google.com>

### *The Use of Paintings*

Paintings in the coffee houses were a combination of European influences such as perspective and shading. In addition, Safavid miniature schools of painting had emerged during the Qajar era, and referred to as “Coffee House painting.” These miniature paintings were very popular, consisting mainly of oil on large canvases or walls. Subjects of this style were often religious in nature, depicting epic and romantic scenes (Canby,1993).

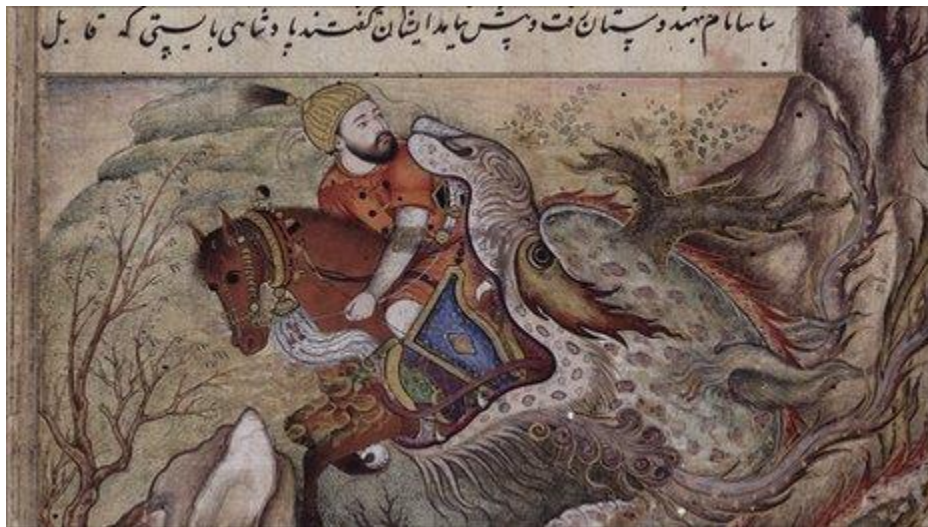


Figure 2.5. Epic Artwork of the Persian Kings, by Vincent Dowd.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11298746>

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The procedure for completing this thesis consisted of two general phases:

- Phase I. Data Collection:
  1. Survey of two existing ethnic restaurants in Raleigh, North Carolina.
  2. Interviews with people relating their past experiences on traditional Restaurants.
  3. Focus Groups: Perceptions of potential clientele of a contemporary Iranian restaurant.
- Phase II. Development of Design Concept.

#### **Survey of Two Existing Ethnic Restaurants**

The experimental research part of this thesis includes the surveys of one ethnic restaurant and one ethnic coffee house, in which both are owned by immigrants.

1. Zinda; Asian restaurant in Raleigh, NC
2. Turkish Delights; Turkish Coffee House in Raleigh, NC



*Zinda; Asian Restaurant in Raleigh, NC*

Figures 1 & 2 below shows the atmosphere of the restaurant.

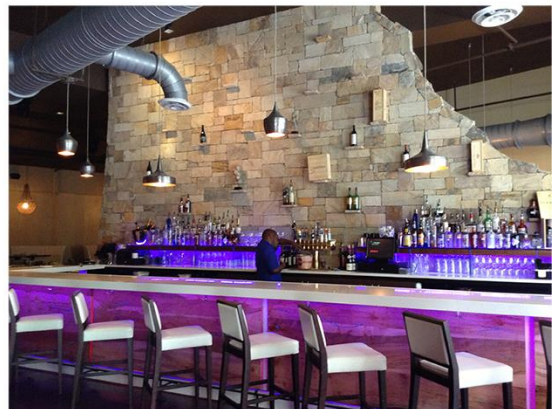


Figure 3.1. Atmosphere of the Zinda; Asian Restaurant in Raleigh, NC. Source: Author.



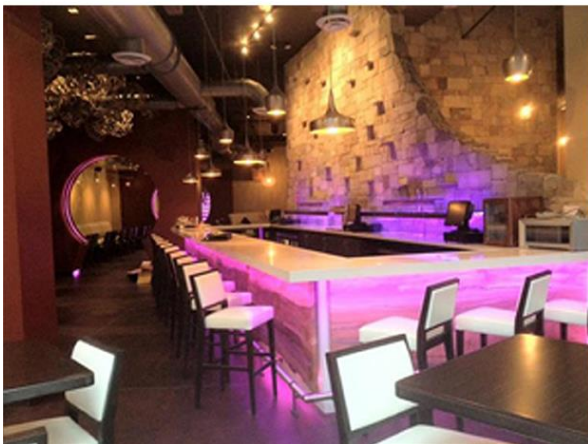


Figure 3.2. Atmosphere of the Zinda; Asian Restaurant in Raleigh, NC. Source: Author.



The Zinda restaurant located in the vibrant downtown area of Raleigh has been appropriately named, with its meaning “Alive” in Hindu. Opening in August of 2012, Zinda is a new Asian style restaurant with a combination of tastes and flavors, which have been created into exciting dishes that heighten the senses of their clientele. Complemented with the food is the featured decorum of Zinda, which has been meticulously designed to add a visual sensation of spice for a complete ethnic dining experience. Zinda is deep rooted in traditional Asian recipes of authentic cuisine selections from China, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Boasting an inventive menu combination of flavors, the atmosphere in its surroundings connects to nature with authentic wood carved tables, stonewalls, ceremonial doors, and inventive light fixtures, offering dramatic shadow and light detailed interludes. The authentic atmosphere draws a unique clientele mixture of businessmen, immigrants and international travelers all taking in the ultimate dining experience of Asia.

***Turkish Delights; Turkish Coffee House in Raleigh, NC***

The Turkish Delights Coffeehouse in Raleigh is a landmark tradition deep in the heart of the Glenwood South restaurant district. The avant-garde purple painted exterior splashes an eclectic Turkish decorum into an intimate lounge seating arrangement. They specialize in homemade treats of creamy ice cream, a variety of Turkish deserts, and superb coffee creations. The uniqueness of the Turkish Delights Coffeehouse captures the ethnic home merchant that combines the upstairs living quarters with an inviting neighbor guest into their Victorian style living room shop.



Figure 3.3. Turkish Delights; Turkish Coffee House in Raleigh, NC. Source: Author.

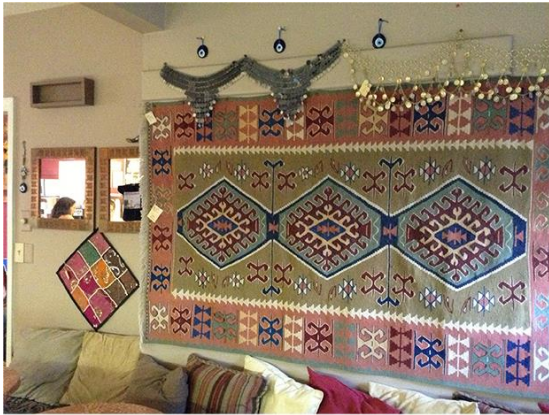


Figure 3.4. Turkish Delights; Turkish Coffee House in Raleigh, NC. Source: Author.

Figures 3 & 4 above shows Turkish Delights which the owner is Turkish. She has been living in Raleigh for more than ten years. On my visit I ordered a tiny cup of Turkish coffee with sugar, something I've never had before, and was surprised by how rich it tasted. My friend and I headed towards a cool-looking room with shelves of ethnic decorations and seating, as well as displays of clothing. It looked like it was formerly a tiny living room, now converted into seating area for the store. Overall, a very interesting and cool experience.

## **Methodological Overview**

### ***Interviews and Questionnaire Analysis***

This part of the thesis is based on a quantitative research method. The method of research was directed by using a questionnaire to specify people's behavior towards an Iranian restaurant. This survey could be a source of useful information which I could use for my restaurant design. The aim of research was an evaluation of people's attitude towards the opening of this new type of restaurant.

A total of 200 respondents participated in this survey; 90 are first generation immigrants who were born in Iran and immigrated to America as adults at the age of 18 and older. 60 are second generation Iranian Americans who were born in America and have lived here all, or mostly all of their lives, some of them are full Iranian and some half Iranian, who have been influenced by their Iranian family members. 50 are Americans and all the age groups represented are between 20 and 55 years old. Almost all respondents live in North Carolina, of which most were contacted via email, and some were interviewed face to face.

The four main questions that the interview protocol focused on were the primarily questions under investigation for the study. The questions are listed below:

#### ***1. Have you ever been to any Iranian restaurant?***

For the first question 65% of the respondents, consisting of 130 people, stated that they have visited an Iranian restaurant while in Iran or in visiting larger cities in the

United States. 53 respondents, who were mostly American, stated they would love to visit an Iranian restaurant at least once, only 17 respondents stated that they would not be interested in visiting an Iranian restaurant.

*2. What attracts you to select a particularly Iranian restaurant?*

75% of the respondents consider Iranian food as a part of their cultural identity. 30 of the interviewees said that they are interested in trying it as a different taste at least once. 20 of the respondents are just concerned about food quality, and not the restaurant brand.

*3. Would you like to have an Iranian restaurant in your area?*

Since an Iranian restaurant does not exist in the Greensboro area, 150 of the respondents stated that they would be excited about having an Iranian restaurant because their only chance to visit an Iranian restaurant is when they travel to Raleigh. Only 5% of respondents were satisfied with the existing number of ethnic restaurants in the Greensboro area. 20% of the interviewees were so keen on Ethnic food.

*4. What are your expectations regarding an Iranian restaurant?*

80% of the respondents look forward to a good menu along with a cultural environment. 8% of the Interviewees expect good customer service. Nearly 12% of the interviewees would prefer a low price with good food quality.

The questionnaire analysis was based on four important questions to know people's basic expectations but additional questions added to the list which can be found in Appendix A. The analysis draws a conclusion that there is indeed a room for an Iranian restaurant in Greensboro. It is an interesting environment for an Iranian community as a part of their cultural identity. Moreover Americans seem curious about new food choices and the cultural atmosphere of a restaurant, and would like to try different tastes. When people go out to dinner, their desire is to escape from a stressful lifestyle and work environment, eating at an Iranian restaurant offers a sense of life.

## **Case Study**

### ***General Overview of Property***

The property chosen for this case study is located at 1901 Spring Garden Street on the southwest corner of Spring Garden and South Chapman. According to tax records, the land mass area is 0.32 acres fitting into an approximate rectangular shape with frontage along Spring Garden and elongated frontage at the intersection of Chapman Street. The corresponding parallel length from Chapman is bounding by Reynolds Place. The property has a wide radius joining the two bisecting streets of Spring Garden and Chapman. The existing building on the site is approximately 2200sf and was most recently used as a restaurant, known as Bianca's Italian Eatery.

### ***History of Property***

The original land use for this site in 1923 was designated as a service station owned by the Winder Oil Company, operating intermittently between 1927 and 1945, with various tenants over the years. The station was leased to Texaco in 1945, upon which they changed the name to Speedy Texaco Service. Texaco renewed their lease in 1960; however in 1963, they closed the station and it remained vacant during 1964 and 1965. In 1966 the land use for this property was converted to a restaurant, and named Leo's Take-Home Chicken. In 1977 the land use for this property changed several times, first as a bar, then as an adult entertainment establishment, and subsequently as a barbecue restaurant, until Bianca's Italian Eatery took over the establishment and had success at this location for 17 years.

### ***Area Analysis***

The property at 1901 Spring Garden Street is one of the busiest intersections in the region due to its proximity to University of North Carolina's Greensboro campus, the Greensboro Coliseum Complex, and the College Park neighborhood. The high-traffic characteristic of this area is due to three major factors: the density of residential housing, growth driven by the University (UNCG), and continued development of the Coliseum complex and commercial spaces.

The major growth for the area can be attributed to the University, which spurs continued investment into new student housing, and support of the community. As a result, there is significant street traffic, bicycle lanes, a bus stop adjacent to the property,

and considerable foot traffic. The property is ideally situated to capture this expanding activity.

### ***Neighborhood Analysis***

The rapid growth of the neighborhood can be primarily attributed to high-density apartment buildings in support of student housing. The College Park neighborhood borders the western side of Spring Garden Street and the north side of the University along Spring Garden. One block east of Spring Garden Street is High Point Road, a major thoroughfare where the Greensboro Coliseum complex is located. Although there are several bars in the area, with a popular wine tasting establishment directly across from the property, there are no restaurants in the immediate area, with the exception of a bakery coffee shop.



### *Site Analysis*

The land is relatively flat with drainage flowing in the northward direction.



Figure 3.5. Property Location. Source: <http://www.google.com>

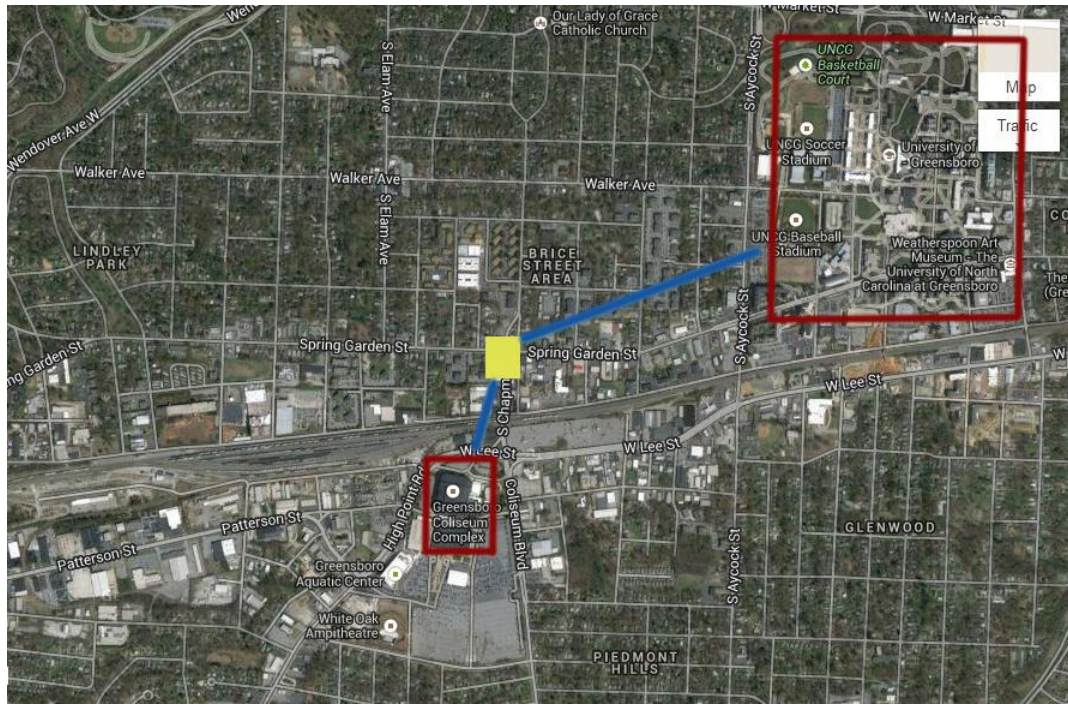


Figure 3.6. Property Relationship to UNCG & Coliseum. Source: <http://www.google.com>



Figure 3.7. Property Relationship to Public Transportation. Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)







Figure 3.10. Entrance; East Facade. Source: Author.



Figure 3.11. Back of the House; South Facade. Source: Author.



Figure 3.12. West Facade. Source: Author.



Figure 3.13. Parking Space. Source: Author.





Figure 3.14. North Facade. Source: Author.



Figure 3.15. View from South Chapman Street. Source: Author.

## Design Overview

The building structure of the old Italian eatery is an oddly rectangular in shape with a boxy reception station positioned face to it. Upon entering the restaurant, the dining area is nearly exposed at first glance. Between the kitchen and dining area, there are restrooms. The kitchen is almost more than half of the whole size of the property and it is located in the back of the house (Figure 3.12 & 3.13).

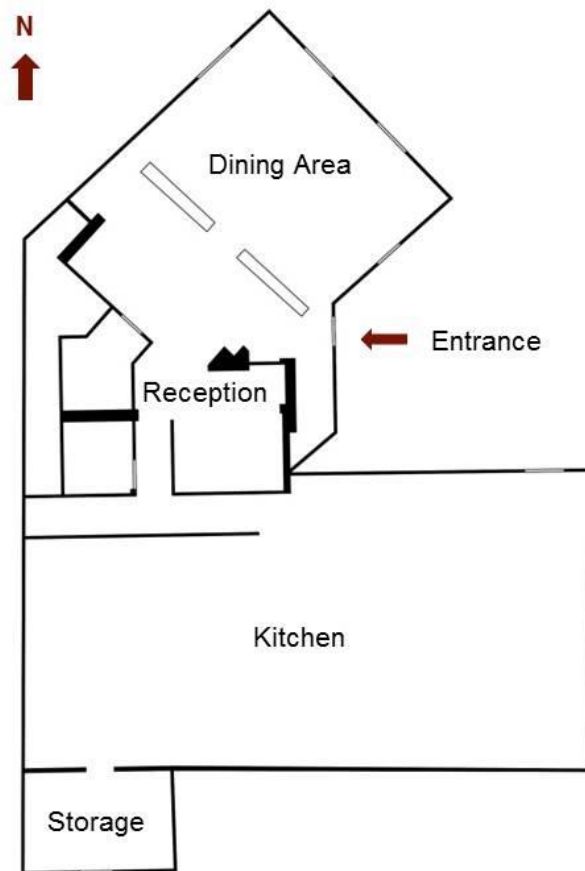


Figure 3.16. Existing Floor Plan. Source: Author.

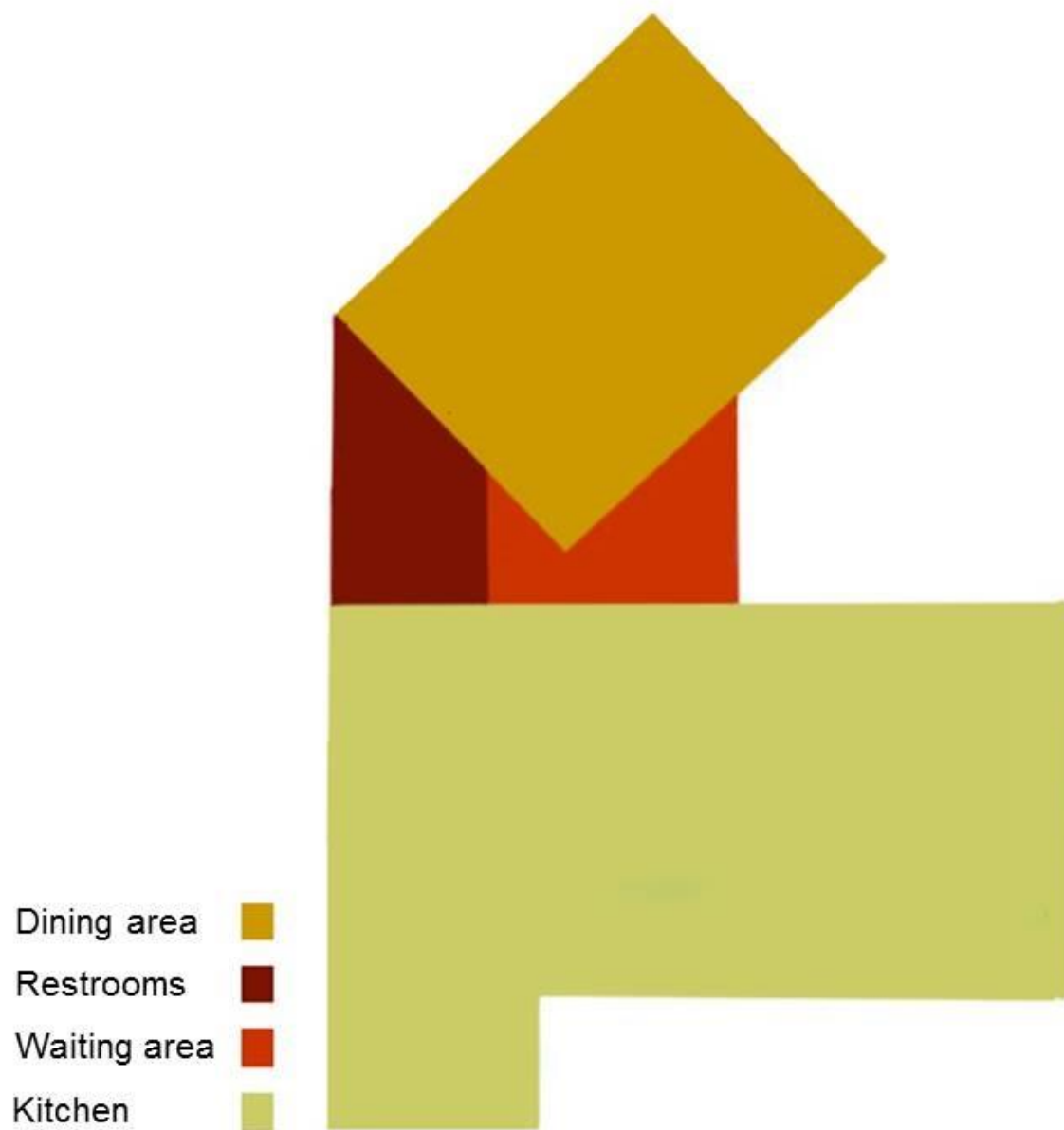


Figure 3.17. Floor Plan Diagram. Source: Author.



The property is currently zoned Commercial-Medium with standard property building setback as set forth in the Commercial-Medium district as follows:

- 15 feet from North
- 15 feet from East
- 15 feet from West
- 0-10 feet from South

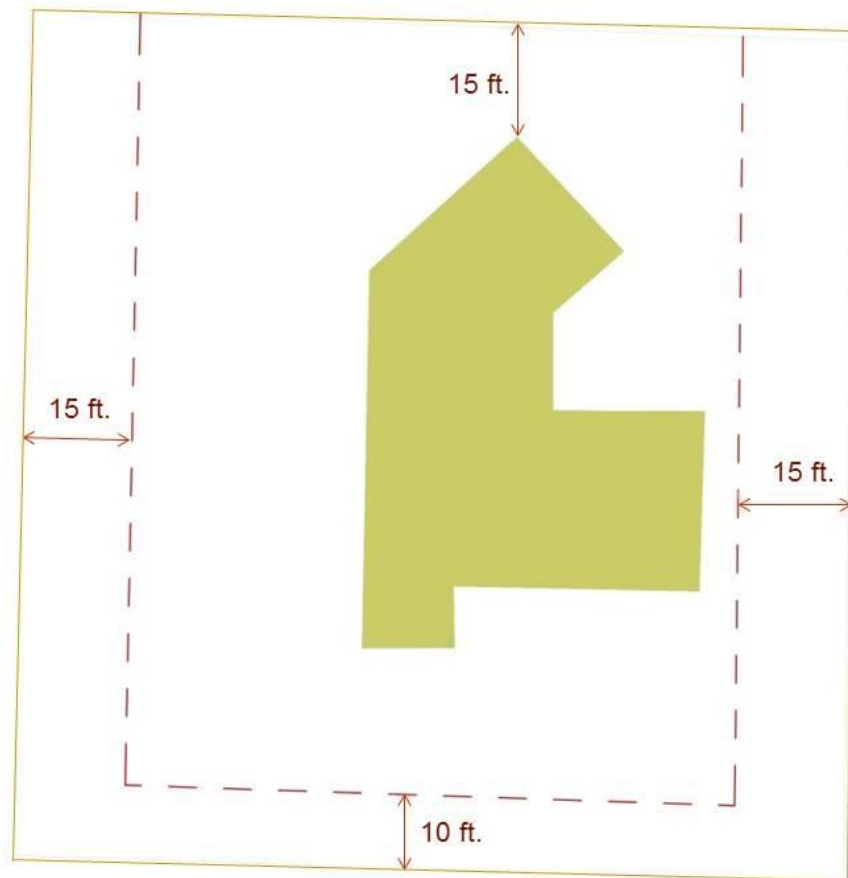


Figure 3.18. Site Plan. Source: Author.

The existing setbacks of the structure on the property are as follows:

- 15 feet from North
- 20 feet from East
- 47 feet from West
- 30 feet from South

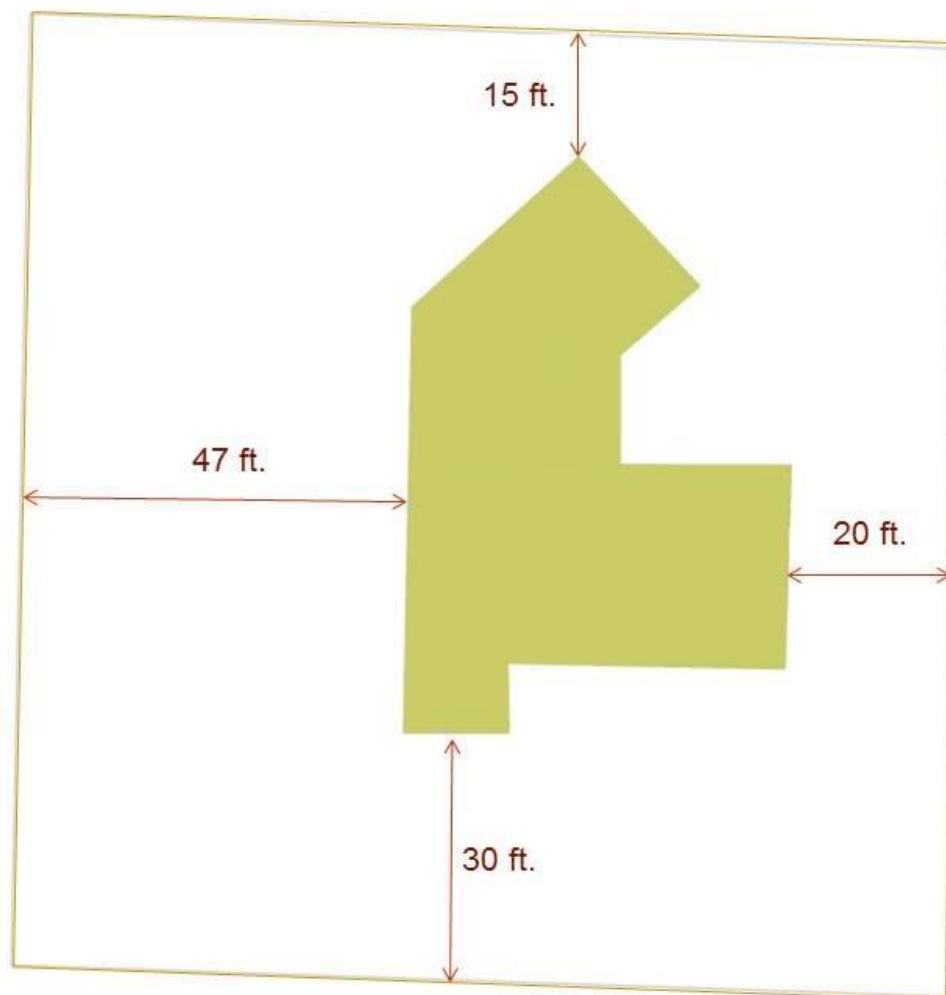


Figure 3.19. Existing Building Setbacks. Source: Author.

## Redesign Overview

In order to break away from the monotone series of oddly, rectangular boxy shapes of the original building structure, and in the process increase the building's occupancy and functionality, while providing visual interest for the space; diagonals were introduced with inspirations from Persian patterns. These diagonal patterns formed a basis for the design concept and invoked character into the space.

Persian patterns are made up of a layout and a design, which in general include one or a number of motifs. In its classification, the original designs are referred to as the “main patterns” and the derivatives the “sub patterns”. Sheilda Nouri-Zaha writes for *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies* an abstract on “Persian Carpet: The Beautiful Picture of Art in History” where Nouri-Zaha identifies 19 groups of classifications and characteristics for these patterns, including:

**1-Historic Monuments & Islamic Buildings:** Inspired by tile-work, structure and geometric shapes of ancient buildings.

**2 - Shah Abbassi:** A special flower, known as Shah Abbassi, set-off by other floral Persian rug patterns and leaves.

**3 - Spiral:** Spiraling branches around leave. The end of each branch splits to resemble the jaws of a dragon.

**4 - Allover:** All parts of pattern are interconnecting usually drawn without the designer's hand ever being lifted.

**5 - Derivative:** Patterns of neighboring regions Similar to Persian rug patterns originally woven in Persia.

**6 - Interconnected (Bandi):** A small piece of design is repeated and connected throughout the artwork.

**7 - Paisley:** Head-bent paisley (common in Indian and Iranian patterns).

**8 - Tree:** Distinctive for their close resemblance to natural tree forms.

**9 - Torkeman (Bokharas):** Geometrical shapes & broken lines.

**10 - Hunting Ground:** Life-like animals.

**11 - Panel:** Multisided panel motif.

**12 - European Flower:** Original Persian designs with roses in light and dark colors.

**13 - Vase:** A single large vase or a smaller vase repeated throughout the artwork.

**14 - Intertwined Fish:** Originally a product of nomadic tribes and enriched by modern designers.

**15 - Mehrab:** Representation of the place in a mosque, where the prayer leader stands. Ornamented with pillars, chandeliers & floral Persian patterns.

**16 - Striped:** Repeated stripes running the length of the artwork, each stripe with its own motif and color.

**17 - Geometrical:** Lines, and geometrical shapes (polygons, etc.).

**18 - Tribal:** Oldest & most original Persian patterns. Simple creations of tribal imagination, inspired by natural surroundings.

**19 - Composites:** A composite of two or more of the above patterns.

Predominantly geometrical characteristic have been chosen for this restaurant design, with the conceptual inspiration taken from star symbols and motifs, which convey the meaning of spirituality and good luck in Persian patterns.



Figure 3.20. Persian Star Patterns. Source: google.com

## **The Design Proposal**

- The building setbacks are derived from the City of Greensboro zoning for the Commercial-Medium district.
- The restaurant design is divided into 4 main spatial relationships:
  1. Front of the house - reception and waiting areas.
  2. Back of the house - kitchen and restrooms
  3. Outdoor Deck - lounge seating area
  4. Main dining area
- Star symbols and motifs are introduced into the design concept to provide unique character appeal.
- Symbolic geometry, pure arc forms are used for windows, doors, and partitions.
- In addition to typical sitting, stylistic lounges and booths are introduced that provide the illusion of authenticity.
- The design tools used for the redesign of the space are generated with AutoCAD for general floor plans, and 3DMax is applied for modeling and rendering techniques, with the use of Photoshop for final touches.

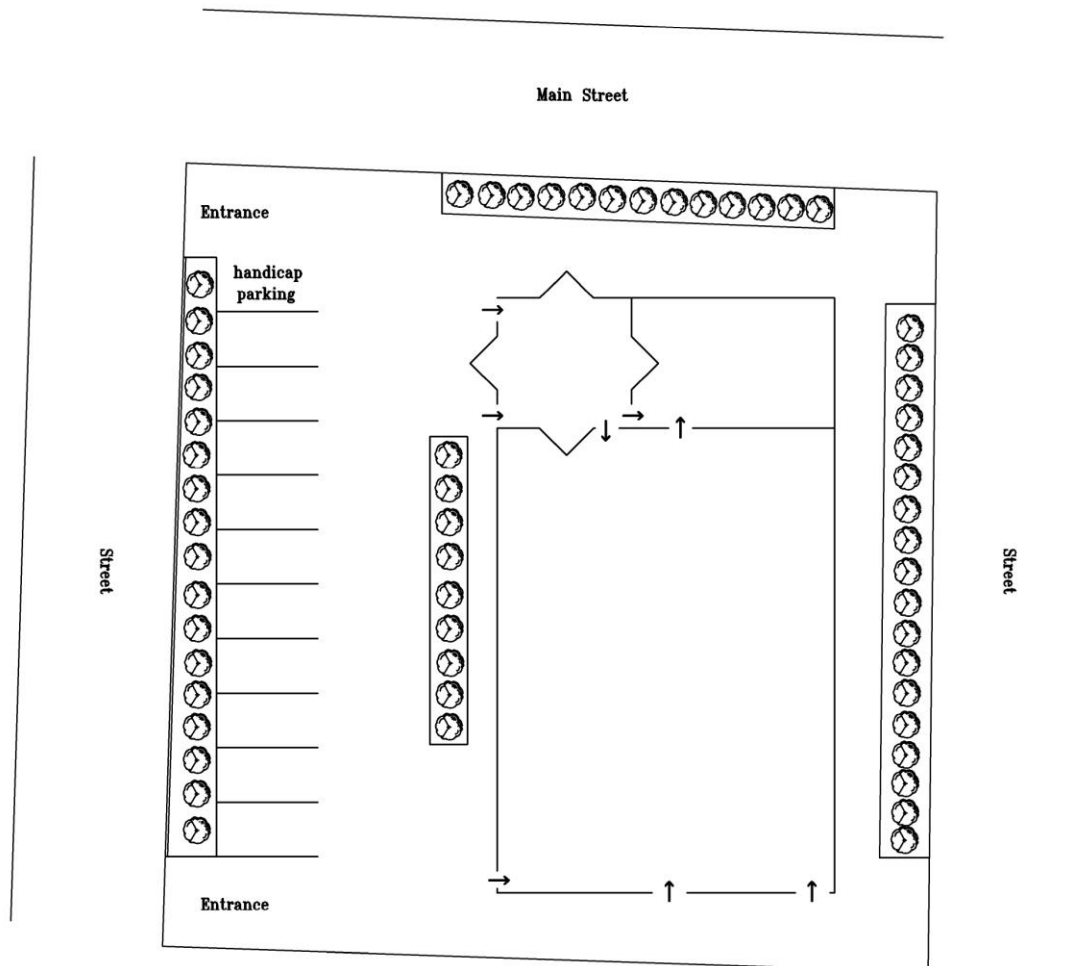


Figure 3.21. Redesigned Site Plan. Source: Author.





Figure 3.22. Redesigned Building Plan. Source: Author.



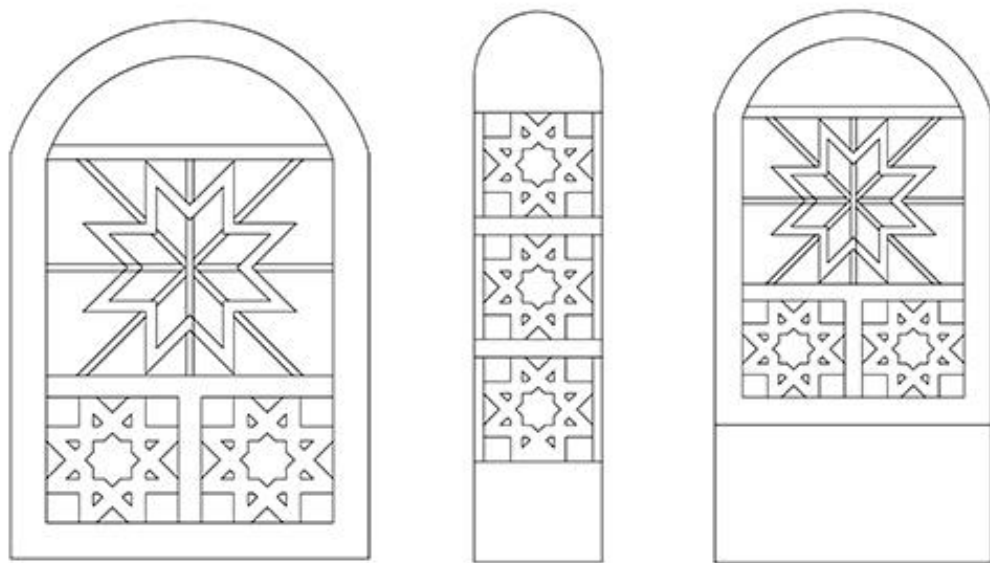


Figure 3.23. Windows, Partitions, and Doors Design. Source: Author.

## Framework Application

### *Ornamentation*

In addition to the restaurant decorum, there are a variety of design elements that contain ornamental function, such as artwork, lanterns, furniture, textures, patterned partitions, geraniums, and Persian carpets.



Figure 3.24. Design Elements with Ornamental Functions. Source: Author.



Figure 3.25. Design Elements with Ornamental Functions. Source: Author.

### *Light*

- Every tabletop is illuminated with its own chandelier, providing a contrast, and emphasizes to focus attention towards dining.
- There is a window in close proximity to the kitchen area, which bringing sunshine into the space, while benefitting the employees physically and psychologically.
- The main dining area has six spacious windows, whereby enhancing the customer's dining experience with sunshine and outdoor scenery.



Figure 3.26. Dining Area Showcasing Decorative Windows. Source: Author.





Figure 3.27. Dining Area Showcasing Lanterns and Chandeliers. Source: Author.

### *Complexity*

- To produce subdivisions, elements such as designed partitions with stained glass are placed in between the dining areas to separate booths, and brick walls were used to segregate the entrance and dining area.
- The use of diagonal features and archways with diverse arrangements of the booths and lounge seating, in conjunction with added design elements, such as the sculptured ceiling patterns together encompasses a complex design arrangement.



Figure 3.28. Subdivision Elements; Designed Stain Glass Partitions. Source: Author.



Figure 3.29. Arched Window Design Feature. Source: Author.

### *Mystery*

- A layered entranceway that gradually introduces design elements into view for added revelations of visual interest as one explores the various regions of the space. Upon entering the restaurant, a brick wall provides seclusion from the entrance to the full view of the dining area, but with enough added interest to encourage further exploration into the space.



- Portions of the exterior facade walls are brick with exposure of design features in the entranceway enticing customers to explore further.
- For added privacy subdividing elements are introduced in the dining area, for a display of activity beyond, and heightening of interests.



Figure 3.30. The Entrance Area with Brick Walls. Source: Author.





Figure 3.31. The Reception Desk at the Entrance Area. Source: Author.

### *Seating Arrangement*

- The seating options vary between private booths, and grouped lounges with combinations of seating and tables that provide a full range of serviced needs.
- The versatile partitions accommodate both the booths and lounges while acting as a privacy barrier and noise reduction between the seating arrangements.
- To give the space specific authentic characteristic, a Persian style of seating on comfortable lounges has been introduced for the outdoor deck.



Figure 3.32. Lounge Seating for the Outdoor Deck. Source: Author.



Figure 3.33. Lounge Seating for the Outdoor Deck. Source: Author.

### *Eliminate Noise*

Acoustical considerations for the surface materials in the walls, floors, and ceilings are complimented with added partitions acting as noise barriers and absorbing materials in the furnishings for a more tranquil setting.



### *Surface Texture*

Surface materials, such as wood, brick, and furniture fabrics are made of natural or artificial textures that provide warm or cool touch perception, which conveys the intended desired effect for the setting. The skylight located at the entranceway conveys a connection to a natural setting.



Figure 3.34. Surface Materials in the Walls, Floors, and Ceilings. Source: Author.

### *Type of Construction Materials*

The construction materials proposed for this thesis project are mainly wood, brick, and plaster. The proposed exterior facade is a combination of plaster and exposed brick with reinforced concrete coping. The wood chosen for this structure has had special considerations for waterproofing as well as sustainable design.

### *Exterior Renderings*



Figure 3.35. Exterior View. Source: Author.



Figure 3.36. Exterior View. Source: Author.



Figure 3.37. Exterior View. Source: Author.





Figure 3.38. Exterior View. Source: Author.



Figure 3.39. Exterior View. Source: Author.



Figure 3.40. Site Plan. Source: Author.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### **Summary of the Study**

Chapter one assesses the reasoning behind the study for an ethnic restaurant. The reasoning begins with the importance of the study, and elaborates with the justification for this study, which then provides the structural framework to the study. Chapter two considers the literature review of material that specifically pertains to the study, after which, surveys and questionnaires are introduced. After the majority of the research for the study has been compiled, chapter three continues with the approach for the design development and its methodology. After all the pertinent information required for the study has been digested a design approach is formulated for a unique type of ethnic restaurant that caters to an urbanized, contemporary Persian community. The procedure described therein is the approach taken to arrive at the design for the resultant ethnic restaurant. Chapter four shows the research conclusions.

The purpose of this study was to develop a design concept for a contemporary Persian restaurant, which included important physical and social aspects of coffeehouses of the past. The initial step for the study was to gather information from literature about historic Persian coffeehouses: introduction of coffeehouses into Iran, and their architectural and design features.

Observing and recording ethnic restaurants, interviewing Iranian citizens familiar with traditional restaurants, and by holding focus group discussions with young adult Iranian citizens, achieved the data that was collected for this study. The information from these processes helped determine historical features to retain cultural and traditional identity, and added features, which attributed to the success and effectiveness of the concept. The potential flexibility of the design is presented through drawings of plans, and renderings.

This design approach can aid future and current restaurateurs in design and creation of a meaningful restaurant experience that gives more to its clients than just a meal. In this thesis, the approach was applied to the design of a Persian restaurant with the theme.

## **Implications**

Although some studies have concentrated their research on the importance of ethnic food as it is relevant to the lives of many of immigrants, once currently does not exist that focuses on the overall experience of the Iranian immigrant.

The results of this study indicates that associations and connections to familiar surrounding assisted in alleviated culture shock from new immigrants, and motivated their desire to visit ethnic establishments. Engaging within the ethnic community establishments awarded the immigrant with sense of acceptance, and thereby provided a safe place where they could be isolated from the host culture. Due to the popularity of ethnic cuisine in the United States, this study will be useful to increase current knowledge

of customer's perceptions and expectations while dining at ethnic restaurants. The results from this study may be used in future research for the Hospitality Industry, with valuable insight to restaurateurs, in order to apply to meet their customers' satisfactions in their own establishments.

### **Recommendations for Further Studies**

Since this study is the first study that addresses the importance of ethnic food from the perspective of an Iranian in the United States, it can serve as a foundation for other relevant topics in terms of implications and models.

As a result of the data analysis and the review of literature, the researcher has the following suggestions for future studies. These propositions are allied with this study through an array of methods, systems and approaches. Studies can therefore be conducted using the following variables:

- This research can be undertaken in different cities of the United States.
- This research can be replicated by other hospitality researchers using an equal number of Iranian respondents, and respondents who are not of Iranian origin.
- In locations where there is a large Iranian population, comparative studies can be undertaken using them as a group; the reasoning being that having lived away from their culture for a fairly long period of time, their needs will probably differ significantly from that of recent Iranian immigrants.
- The study on the culture of Iran and its changes that has influenced the eating habits and norms of Iranians.

- Similar studies can be conducted with different ethnic populations in order to generalize the results.
- Future research may compare each group of customers by income, age, education, and gender.

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APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your nationality?
4. If you are an international student, how long have you been in the US?
5. Has it been very different from your home country? In what ways? Please describe!
6. How much of your history, traditions, and customs are important to you?
7. Are you active in organizations or social groups of your own ethnic group?
8. How much do you think your life could be affected by your ethnic group membership?
9. Have you been able to find places that remind you of your own culture and home?
10. Can you describe type of places that remind you of your own cultural identity?
11. Have you ever been to an Iranian restaurant?
12. Would you like to have an Iranian restaurant in your area?
13. What would attract you to select an Iranian restaurant?
14. Would you like to have an Iranian restaurant in your area?
15. Do you feel more comfortable in an Iranian restaurant or other restaurants?
16. In what way would an Iranian restaurant, help you to assimilate in a new culture?
17. What are your expectations of an Iranian restaurant?