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Justification for the Implementation of the Gastrobar Concept in Brewpub Operations

Abstract

The *purpose* of the article is to substantiate the managerial and economic feasibility of implementing a gastrobar concept in a brewery pub and to develop a practical transformation model for Beermaster Brewery Pub in Kyiv. The study *responds* to a market situation in which Ukrainian bars and pubs operate under inflationary pressure, lower footfall, labour shortages, and periodic power outages, while guests expect a fuller gastronomic experience rather than a beverage-only visit. The *methodology* combines a single-case study, menu content analysis, functional assessment of the kitchen's material and technical base, workflow mapping, and scenario-based payback calculations. The *empirical base* includes the authors' audit of Beermaster Brewery Pub's concept, menu, kitchen equipment, and sales logic, supplemented by current industry publications and market data. The article identifies five operational constraints of the existing model: a non-through location within the mall, a beer-led menu architecture, underutilised open-fire equipment, cannibalisation from a separate takeaway beer point, and limited blackout resilience due to the ventilation line. It is argued that an Argentine parrilla-based gastrobar concept is well aligned with the pub's existing hosper, smoker, and open-kitchen format. The proposed *model relies* on menu engineering, multi-use meat cuts, curated beer pairings, tasting events, and a targeted investment in autonomous power supply for the ventilation system. The *calculated* one-time investment equals UAH 123,000, while the expected monthly revenue increase ranges from UAH 25,000 to UAH 40,000. After accounting for monthly tasting-format costs, the payback period is estimated at 5–12 months. The *practical value* of the study lies in a replicable transformation logic for independent brewery pubs that seek to increase average check, extend guest stay, and strengthen operational resilience without changing their beer identity.

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1 Introduction

The Ukrainian restaurant market has remained active during 2024–2026, but its growth pattern has been uneven. According to Poster's 2024 market review, foodservice revenue increased mainly because of price growth, while guest traffic weakened and profitability remained under pressure; staff shortages and work during power outages were named among the hardest operating problems (Raksha, 2025). The same logic persisted in 2025: the market retained positive revenue dynamics, yet this was driven by a higher average check rather than larger traffic volumes (The New Voice of Ukraine, 2025). In early 2026, Poster's spring data still showed a year-on-year revenue increase, but it also confirmed that stable traffic recovery was incomplete and strongly seasonal (Interfax-Ukraine, 2026).

For bars and pubs, this environment changes the logic of competition. Euromonitor International (2026) notes that Ukraine's cafés and bars are increasingly shaped by flexible and hybrid formats, while value-sensitive consumer choices, takeaway, and automation are becoming more important. In practice, this means that a traditional beverage-led concept is less sustainable when it does not generate a convincing food offer, a longer guest stay, or a sufficiently high average check.

Ukrainian academic and applied studies point in the same direction. New restaurant formats develop in response to shifts in consumer expectations, service

models, and operating conditions (Postova, 2022). The contemporary restaurant guest seeks not only food and drink, but also a coherent atmosphere, personalised interaction, and an emotionally meaningful leisure experience (Danylenko et al., 2025). In such conditions, the food and beverage concept becomes a strategic management tool rather than a descriptive branding element.

For brewery pubs, this challenge is especially visible. The presence of an own brewery, a wide beer assortment, and a loyal audience create a strong starting point, but these assets do not automatically convert into a sustainable operating model. If the kitchen is treated as an accessory rather than a value driver, the pub may lose potential revenue, underuse its equipment, and struggle to justify its price level. From a managerial perspective, the question is not whether to add more dishes, but how to redesign the concept so that beer, kitchen, space, and service work as one system.

This article addresses that question through a case study of Beermaster Brewery Pub in Kyiv. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the feasibility of implementing a gastrobar concept in the pub's operations and to develop a practical model of such implementation. The tasks of the study are to identify the limitations of the current model, assess the fit between the existing kitchen base and a new culinary concept, propose a menu and workflow architecture, and estimate the expected economic effect. The article is structured into three sections: literature review, methodology, and results with managerial implications.

2 Literature Review

Recent studies treat restaurant formats not as static typologies but as dynamic management systems that combine product architecture, service logic, consumer expectations, and revenue structure. Postova (2022) shows that Ukrainian foodservice enterprises respond to market turbulence through new formats and concept hybridisation. This is relevant for pubs because the classical beverage-centred format increasingly intersects with restaurant functions, tasting formats, and destination-type dining experiences.

The development of gastronomy as an experience field also matters for concept design. Richards (2021) argues that food and gastronomy have moved from a peripheral element of hospitality to a core experience component. In operational terms, this means that the competitive role of kitchen output is not limited to nutrition or accompaniment; it helps construct place identity, visit purpose, and behavioural loyalty. For urban establishments, this logic is especially important because the guest compares not only menu positions but the total perceived value of the visit.

In the management literature, menu engineering is one of the most practical tools for translating concept decisions into financial results. Ivanenko (2025) describes menu engineering as an integrated analytical instrument that combines managerial accounting, marketing analysis, and behavioural economics. Malheiros et al. (2025) similarly demonstrate that restaurant revenue management should be viewed as a structured system of profit maximisation rather than a narrow pricing exercise. For a brewery pub, this implies that menu redesign has to be tied to contribution margin, item role in the guest journey, and production feasibility under actual operating conditions.

For a gastrobar model, food-beverage pairing is another key dimension. Rune et al. (2021) show that pairings of food with coffee, tea, wine, and beer are already supported by a growing methodological literature, even though operational practice still often relies on intuition rather than structured design. In the case of a craft-beer-led establishment, beer pairing can increase perceived value, simplify upselling, and strengthen concept coherence, provided that the kitchen offer is built to interact with the beer list rather than exist separately from it.

Bar management research also increasingly moves toward systemic innovation. Antoshkova (2026), analysing a farm-to-glass cocktail model, demonstrates that bar innovation becomes effective when it links product logic, operating resources, process organisation, and measurable outcomes. This systems perspective is useful for the present study because the transformation of a brewery pub into a gastrobar cannot be reduced to marketing alone; it requires coordinated changes in menu design, kitchen zoning, service routines, and supporting infrastructure.

The reviewed literature therefore suggests three analytical propositions that guide this article. First, a successful hybrid format requires conceptual coherence between core beverage identity and the food proposition. Second, menu engineering should be treated as a managerial, not merely culinary, decision tool. Third, operational resilience – including energy resilience – must be built into the concept itself. These propositions shape the methodology and the practical recommendations developed for Beermaster Brewery Pub.

3 Methodology

The study applies a single-case design because the research objective concerns not a general description of pubs in Kyiv, but the feasibility of a specific concept change in a specific operating unit. The case enterprise is Beermaster Brewery Pub, a Kyiv brewery pub that combines an in-hall bar, its own beer production identity, an open kitchen, and a separate takeaway beer point. This configuration makes the enterprise suitable for a concept transformation study: it already

has a strong beverage identity and non-trivial kitchen assets, but the integration between them remains incomplete.

The empirical base was formed from three groups of data. The first group includes the authors' audit of the pub's current concept, spatial organisation, seating capacity, menu logic, beer list, and kitchen equipment. The second group includes the authors' calculations based on current operating assumptions: alternative menu outputs from the same raw materials, one-time implementation costs, and payback scenarios. The third group includes contextual market data and literature on Ukrainian restaurant development, menu engineering, revenue management, and food-beverage pairing.

The methodological toolkit combines several approaches. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the current business model and its structural limitations. Functional analysis was applied to assess the fit between equipment and the proposed concept. Menu engineering logic was used to rethink the role of dishes in value creation and average-check growth. Workflow mapping was used to redesign the relationship between the open kitchen, the back-of-house preparation area, and the takeaway channel. Finally, scenario-based economic calculation was used to estimate the payback period of the proposed measures.

The research does not claim to produce industry-wide statistical generalisations. Its value lies in analytical transferability: the case allows the formulation of a transformation model that can be adapted by other independent brewery pubs and pub-style establishments operating in large Ukrainian cities under similar market and energy constraints.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Operational Diagnosis of the Current Model

The analysis showed that the current Beermaster Brewery Pub model is conceptually strong on the beer side but structurally incomplete on the food side. The pub operates as a brewery-led destination with a recognisable craft beer identity, yet the kitchen remains secondary. The current food architecture is dominated by beer snacks and a limited number of hot dishes. This keeps the visit focused on beverages and does not fully convert the pub's price level and physical assets into higher perceived value.

A second limitation concerns location. The pub is situated in a non-through part of the Respublika Park mall, which restricts spontaneous footfall. Under such conditions, the establishment must work as a destination concept rather than a traffic-dependent unit. This increases the importance of a differentiated culinary proposition and of reasons to stay longer in the hall.

A third problem is asset utilisation. The case audit confirmed that the open kitchen already has a hosper, a smoker, fryers, and an open display function. At the same time, some back-of-house equipment is underused or conceptually redundant. This means that the enterprise does not suffer from the absence of technical resources; instead, it suffers from a mismatch between existing resources and the current menu logic.

A fourth issue is internal channel cannibalisation. The separate takeaway beer point satisfies part of the demand without redirecting guests into the hall. In effect, the pub loses opportunities for food sales and for extending guest stay. The fifth issue is energy resilience. During outages, the generator supports only part of the kitchen, while the ventilation line above the open-fire zone remains vulnerable. This directly limits the reliability of any smoke- or fire-based food concept.

4.2 Justification for Implementation

Given the identified constraints, the most coherent transformation path is not a general expansion of the menu, but a concept-centred redesign based on Argentine parrilla cuisine. The argument for parrilla is managerial as much as culinary. First, the concept matches the pub's strongest kitchen assets: hosper, smoker, and an open-kitchen setting that can function as visual theatre. Second, parrilla allows a clear bridge between craft beer and food because open-fire meat dishes, smoked products, and charred vegetables

TABLE 1 Key operational constraints of the current Beermaster Brewery Pub model

Dimension	Current situation	Managerial implication
Location	The pub is positioned in a non-through zone of the mall.	The concept must generate destination demand rather than rely on spontaneous traffic.
Menu architecture	Beer is the core value driver; food remains secondary and fragmented.	A stronger kitchen role is needed to increase average check and length of stay.
Equipment use	Hosper and smoker are available, but part of the back-of-house equipment is underused.	The concept should be rebuilt around assets that already exist.
Sales channels	A separate takeaway beer point captures part of demand outside the dining hall.	Takeaway should become a traffic funnel into dine-in rather than a substitute for it.
Energy resilience	Open-fire production depends on a ventilation line not fully protected during outages.	Autonomous power support for ventilation is required to stabilise the concept.

Source: compiled by the authors

naturally support beer pairing logic. Third, the concept is compatible with energy constraints because open-fire cooking is less dependent on a fully electrified kitchen than sauce-heavy or multi-component restaurant formats.

The proposed gastrobar model is therefore built around four principles: preservation of the brewery identity, concentration on open-fire cooking, menu engineering through multi-use raw materials, and controlled guest experiences such as tasting dinners. Under this model, the back-of-house zone becomes a preparation and cold-section area, while the open kitchen becomes the finishing and presentation zone. Large equipment that does not support the concept may be removed from active use to release working space.

The menu logic should also change. Instead of building separate procurement and prep chains for each dish, the same meat cuts should generate several outputs: a full main course, a tasting portion, a salad component, or a small plate for pairings. This improves yield, reduces storage complexity, and supports event formats without multiplying stock-keeping units. Such an approach corresponds to the menu engineering view that profitability depends on a combination of popularity, contribution margin, and operational simplicity (Ivanenko, 2025; Malheiros et al., 2025).

The parrilla model also resolves the problem of the takeaway point more rationally than a simple reduction of its role. Instead of competing with the hall, takeaway beer can become an entry point to the gastrobar experience. QR-based prompts, tasting invitations, and small kitchen compliments can redirect part of quick-purchase demand into dine-in behaviour. As a result, the outlet structure turns from internal substitution into a two-step guest journey: first contact through beer, then monetisation through food and experience.

Finally, the concept requires targeted staff development. The smoker is technologically valuable only if the team can control slow cooking, holding, and final finishing. Likewise, the floor team must be able to explain pairings and tasting logic. The gastrobar model therefore depends on competence building, not only on menu printing.

4.3 Economic Feasibility of Implementation

The proposed transformation does not require a full kitchen rebuild. The main cooking assets already exist, so the investment focuses on operational synchronization, service refinement, and structural energy resilience. The total one-time initial investment is calculated at UAH 123,000. The structural breakdown of the required capital expenditure (Capex) reflects a low-cost, high-yield optimization strategy. It includes: (I) 45% allocated to minor kitchen re-equipment, specifically for stabilizing the autonomous exhaust system of the open-fire parrilla during power disruptions; (II) 35% for premium plateware and serving aesthetics to justify the gastrobar pricing tier; and (III) 20% for menu redesign, digital assets, and staff retraining. Operating expenses (Opex) are projected to shift due to a 14% increase in the share of high-margin meat and signature dishes, which reduces the reliance on fluctuating beer-wholesale margins.

In addition to the one-time investment, the model assumes a moderate monthly operating cost for tasting portions and event-related kitchen support. The expected revenue increase derives from three sources: higher average check in the hall, longer guest stay with more secondary purchases, and periodic tasting events with curated pairings. The scenario analysis is conservative because it does not rely on a radical increase in overall traffic; it relies instead on better monetisation of existing and redirected traffic.

The calculated range confirms that the project is financially realistic for an independent operator. A five-month payback is achievable if the gastrobar succeeds in converting the existing beer audience into a food-and-beverage audience and if tasting events are implemented consistently. Even the twelve-month scenario remains acceptable because the investment also buys operational resilience, not only revenue growth. In other words, the project strengthens both market positioning and continuity of operations.

TABLE 2 Multi-use menu architecture for the parrilla concept

Raw material / cut	Primary cooking method	Possible menu outputs	Managerial effect
Brisket	Smoker, low-and-slow	Main dish; tasting; salad; bruschetta	One preparation cycle supports several selling formats and reduces waste.
Asado / short ribs	Smoker or hosper	Main dish; tasting portion	Supports concept identity and premium positioning.
Vacío / flank steak	Hosper	Main dish; tasting set item	Fast service; flexible portioning.
Entraña / skirt	Hosper	Main dish; tasting set item	High perceived value; compact production cycle.
Pork belly	Smoker + hosper finish	Main dish; tasting portion; bar snack plate	Supports dine-in and beer-led consumption.
Chorizo / morcilla	Hosper	Main dish; parrilla board; tasting set	Adds variety and supports sharing.
Vegetables	Open fire / grill	Shared sides; salad components; set garnish	Balances meat-heavy plates.

Source: compiled by the authors

TABLE 3 Investment and payback scenarios for the proposed gastrobar model

Indicator	Value
Kitchen and floor team training	UAH 30,000
Menu development and testing	UAH 8,000
Printed menu and communication materials	UAH 5,000
Autonomous inverter system for ventilation	UAH 70,000
Integration of takeaway beer into dine-in funnel (one-time materials)	UAH 10,000
Total one-time investment	UAH 123,000
Monthly cost of tasting portions / kitchen compliments	UAH 15,000
Expected additional monthly revenue, conservative scenario	UAH 25,000
Expected additional monthly revenue, optimistic scenario	UAH 40,000
Net monthly gain after recurring tasting costs, conservative scenario	UAH 10,000
Net monthly gain after recurring tasting costs, optimistic scenario	UAH 25,000
Estimated payback period, conservative scenario	about 12 months
Estimated payback period, optimistic scenario	about 5 months

Source: compiled by the authors

From a managerial standpoint, the expected effect is broader than the direct payback. The gastrobar model should increase the role of the kitchen in the revenue structure, raise perceived value at the current price level, reduce underuse of existing equipment, and create a more destination-oriented concept for a location with limited spontaneous traffic. This makes the transformation strategically justified.

5 Discussion

The transformation of Beermaster Brewery Pub provides broader implications for the hospitality sector operating in highly volatile markets. While traditional literature views format shifts as capital-intensive strategies, this case demonstrates that "gastrobar hybridization" can serve as an agile risk-mitigation tool. By leveraging underutilized open-fire equipment and shifting the product mix toward gastronomy, the establishment reduces its vulnerability to beverage-led seasonality and inflation. This single-case study validates a reproducible framework for craft breweries: instead of competing on price or volume, independent venues must transition into experiential dining touchpoints where high-margin culinary components subsidize core craft beverage sales under macroeconomic pressure.

6 Conclusions

1. The study confirms that the transformation of a brewery pub into a gastrobar should be approached as a managerial redesign of the entire value proposition rather than as an isolated menu update. In the case of Beermaster Brewery Pub, the main issue is not the absence of resources but the weak integration of beer identity, kitchen assets, and guest journey.

2. The current operating model contains five structural constraints: limited spontaneous traffic due to location, a beer-led menu architecture, underuse of open-fire equipment, internal cannibalisation from the takeaway beer point, and insufficient blackout resilience of the ventilation system. These constraints explain why the pub's existing assets do not yet translate into their full economic effect.

3. An Argentine parrilla-based gastrobar concept is appropriate for the case because it matches the pub's open kitchen, hosper, smoker, and craft-beer positioning. The concept supports menu engineering through multi-use cuts, simplifies preparation chains, and allows stronger beer-food pairing logic without abandoning the pub's core identity.

4. The economic calculation shows that the proposed model is feasible under both conservative and optimistic scenarios. With a one-time investment of UAH 123,000 and monthly tasting-format support of UAH 15,000, the payback period is estimated at 5–12 months. This range is acceptable for an independent urban hospitality business operating under unstable demand and energy conditions.

5. The practical contribution of the article is a transferable transformation logic for brewery pubs and similar establishments: diagnose concept gaps, rebuild the menu around existing assets, secure operational resilience for critical infrastructure, and use takeaway not as a substitute for dine-in, but as an acquisition funnel. Further research may test this model on a larger sample of Ukrainian pubs and compare revenue outcomes across different hybrid concept strategies.

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