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# THE POTENTIAL OF A JAPANESE RESTAURANT IN VAASA

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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project is to study the market situation and consumers' behavior in the restaurant business in Vaasa, in order to develop a business plan for a Japanese restaurant in this city. The study focuses on two main areas, the development of our product, and how to bring it as a new product into this market.

The theoretical part of the study consists of three parts. The first part is a thorough study about Japanese cuisine, which is the foundation of the product development of our own particular product. The second part deals with the general product development and introduction theory, which assists us in developing a reliable strategy to bring our product. The third part is the theoretical guidelines for composing a comprehensive business plan for the restaurant. The empirical part is a market study by the means of a questionnaire assisted survey. In total, 70 questionnaires were collected from respondents with various backgrounds mainly from Vaasa and Ostrobothnia region.

The results of the study prove that there is a need for a *sushi* and Japanese restaurant in Vaasa. Most people have already had certain experiences with *sushi* and Japanese food, and they have a positive attitude to bringing it into their diet. We also learnt some facts about people's dining habits in restaurant which are important pieces of information for the development of our business plan in the future.

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Keywords                      Japanese Cuisine, Product development, Business plan

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*atsuage* - deep fried tofu cake, 14

*ayu* - sweetfish, 10

### B

*bancha* - coarse grade tea, 15

*bento*. See *obento*

### C

*cha kaiseki* - light meal served before japanese tea ceremony, 17

*chikuwa* - a Japanese dish made from fish paste, 13

*chukka ryori* - domesticated Chinese foods in Japan, 17

### D

*dashi* - Japanese basic stock made from *kombu* and *katsuobushi*. See *kombu*, *katsuobushi*

### E

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### G

*gari*- pickled ginger slice, 25

*genmaicha* - ordinary grade *bancha* mixed with roasted grains of brown rice, 15

*gyokuro* - the finest tea made from tenderest leaves, 16

*gyoza* - Japanese dumpling, 17

## H

*hashi* - chopsticks, 20

*hashioki* - chopsticks rest, 20

*hayashi raisu* - hashed beef stew served with rice, 17

*hira zukuri* - thick-sliced sashimi, 25

*hojicha* - roasted bancha. See bancha

## I

*ichiju sansai* - a standard Japanese meal, including rice, one soup and three dishes, 17

*ikejime* - the method of preserving the freshness of fish by draining their blood from holes cut near the gills and tail, 25

*itameru* - saut éng, 13

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*kamaboko* - a Japanese dish made from fish paste, 12

*kare raisu* - meat curry with rice, 6

*katsuobushi* - dried bonito flakes, 15

*kinugoshi* - silken tofu, soft and smooth, 14

*koji* - name of a mould used to make soy sauce and *miso*. See *miso*

*kombu* - kelp sea vegetable, 15

*komesu* - Japanese rice vinegar, 15

*koyadofu* - freeze dried tofu, 14

*kukicha* - roasted *bancha* containing twigs and stems. See *bancha*

## M

*matcha* - powdered green tea, 16

*mirin* - sweet cooking *sake*, 15

*miso* - Japanese paste resulting from the fermenting and aging process of soybeans and salt in *koji* mould, 15

*mochi* - Japanese rice cake made of glutinous rice, 14

*momendofu* - cotton tofu, 14

*mugicha* - a type of tea made from roasted barley, 16

*mushiki* - round steamer, 12

*musu* - steaming, 12–13

## N

*narezushi* - a style of *Sushi* where raw carp was alternated with layers of rice and salt in a wooden bucket, weighted with a heavy stone, 22

*niru* - simmering, 12

*nori* - roasted seaweed sheet, 23

## O

*obent ô* - Japanese lunch box, 6

*omuraisu* - rice wrapped in omelet served with ketchup, 17

*osaka-zushi* - kansai-style *sushi* made by firmly pressing cooked rice in a square wooden box called *oshigata*, 22

*oshigata* - a square wooden box used to make *osaka-zushi*. See *osaka-zushi*

## S

*sake* - Japanese rice wine, 16

*sashimi* - a Japanese dish in which a slice of raw fish or seafood dipped in *wasabi* and soy sauce, 25

*seiro* - rectangular steamer, 12

*sencha* - high grade green tea picked from young bushes, 16

*shabu shabu* - Japanese hotpot, 6

*shochu* - a white spirit distilled from grain, or starch, 16

*soba* - buckwheat noodle made from buckwheat flour and salt, usually mixed with wheat flour, 14

*somen* - a type of noodle made from very fine wheat flour and salt, thin and white in color, 14

*sushi* - a specific style of Japanese cuisine that combines vinegar seasoned rice with a variety of seafood and vegetables, 22

## T

*tempura* - a Japanese dish that is battered and deep-fried, 10

*teppan* - cast-iron skillet, 12

*tonkatsu* - breaded deep-fried pork, 6

## U

*udon* - a type of noodle made from wheat flour and salt, thick and chewy, 14

*umami* - the fifth taste underlying savoriness, 9

*umeboshi* - pickled plum, 15

*umeshu* - a plum-flavored liqueur, 16

*usu zukuri* - thin-sliced sashimi, 25

## W

*wasabi* - Japanese horseradish, 10

*washoku ryori* - authentic Japanese foods, 17

## Y

*yakiama* - a broiling net, 12

*yakisoba* - Japanese stir-fried noodle, 17

*yaku* - broiling, 11–12

*yoshoku ryori* - domesticated Western foods in Japan, 17

*yubiki* - a method of preserving fresh fish in which boiling water is poured on raw fish, then immediately cooled by immersion in cool water, 25

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will discuss the background of the study. In addition, the aim and structure of the study is described. At the end of the chapter, the motivations and restrictions of the study will be clarified.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Eating habits have been changing over years. Nowadays, people tend to consume healthier foods with diverse ingredients in smaller portions. Also, fresh and seasonal ingredients are items that are most sought for. Following these trends, Japanese cuisine has gained its popularity among diners and became a stylish way of dining out. In Finland, Japanese food culture is not a new subject. Several Japanese restaurants are running throughout the country, from big cities to small towns. Some basic Japanese condiments, such as seaweed sheets, Japanese rice vinegar, *sushi* seasoning, wasabi, teriyaki sauce, crabsticks, etc, can now be found in supermarkets. Articles about *sushi* and Japanese cuisine are published in public media. As a result, most Finnish people basically know about Japanese foods, especially *sushi*, even though they might not have tried it before.

Recently, *sushi* has been introduced to Vaasa and received lots of positive reactions from local people. There are two places where *sushi* is sold, which are Ritz Cafe Bar and Ruosala Fishmonger. However, for some reasons, Ritz Cafe Bar has put *Sushi* Wednesday event on hold since February 2010. Therefore, at the moment, only Ruosala Fishmonger serves takeaway *sushi* on every Friday. After some casual observations and conversations with local people, we have found a high interest in this new product and hence, a potential market for the first Japanese restaurant in Vaasa. Yet, it still needs further study and research in order to get the correct answer for this question-mark market, and later a written business plan for the restaurant which can truly reflect the uniqueness of Japanese cuisine and satisfy customer expectation at the same time. These are what we are working on, and the results will be written in this final thesis report.

## **1.2 Aim and structure of the study**

The final aim of our thesis is to have a thorough understanding of our product, which is Japanese cuisine, and our potential market, Vaasa. All knowledge and data acquired in this work would also be used in a business plan for a Japanese restaurant in Vaasa in the future. The procedure of acquiring the knowledge and collecting the data includes some theoretical studies and an empirical research.

The theory of our project includes the study of Japanese cuisine, new product development and introduction, as well as a theoretical framework for drawing up a business plan. Our empirical part will be a study about bringing Japanese cuisine to Vaasa. Our data will be collected through a research on the dining habits of local market as well as their interests in Japanese food. After the study and research, the knowledge and data will be analyzed and discussed, following the content and structure with an outline of a business plan.

To sum up, the structure of our study and research will be:

- Theoretical part of Japanese cuisine, new product development and introduction, and framework of drawing up a successful business plan.
- Empirical part with a questionnaire survey, collecting information about people's dining habits, opinions and expectations towards Japanese foods in Vaasa area.
- Analysis and conclusion from the results.
- Outline of the final business plan.

The thesis is written by two authors who share the common interests in this topic, Tran Phuong and Zou Qing. However, they are responsible for different parts of the work, as shown in the following table:

<p><b>Phuong Tran</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Background of the study</li> <li>1.3 Motivation for the study</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Japanese Cuisine</li> <li>6. Data Analysis             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.2 Japanese Cuisine in Vaasa</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Conclusion             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 Discussion</li> <li>7.2 Suggestion for further studies and research</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Zou Qing</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2 Aim and structure of the study</li> <li>1.4 Limitation of the Study</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. New Product Development and Introduction</li> <li>4. Drawing up a Business Plan</li> <li>5. Research Approach and Method</li> <li>6. Data Analysis             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Dining habits</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Conclusion             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 Discussion</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

A questionnaire and an outline of a business plan are drawn up by both of the authors.

### **1.3 Motivation of the study**

Japanese food culture is very interesting and attractive. Furthermore, it is quite similar to Finnish food culture. In Finland, a lot of fresh and seasonal ingredients are used in cooking, preparation methods are thoughtfully chosen to keep the clean flavors for the food, and both Japanese and Finnish people follow the simplicity in making their meal. From these common points, and with the love for

Japanese foods, we have come up with the idea of running a Japanese restaurant in Vaasa. The motivations behind this are to introduce an interesting food culture and to bring a new flavor into town. Moreover, there has not been any Japanese restaurant in Vaasa so far. As mentioned in the introduction part, only Ruosala Fishmonger sells takeaway sushi. However, customers have to place order beforehand and pick up at the fish shop on Friday. This causes a restriction and inconvenience for customers in consuming *sushi* on a more frequent basis. A Japanese restaurant will help solving this problem. In addition, it brings an option for diners to have a fuller experience in Japanese cuisine with various dishes besides sushi. Also, since both of the authors are majors in Hotel and Restaurant Business, this would be a very good opportunity to practice what we have been learning. Finally, we are in the progress of opening a Japanese restaurant in Vaasa. Therefore, this study and its results would be very realistic and useful for us in the future.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the study**

Every study and research goes with certain limitation and restrictions, as it is never possible to construct the perfect environment and conditions for the research. The major limitations of our study are predicted by us to be as follows:

- For the theoretical part, there is quite limited amount of literature about product development and introduction particularly in Finland, hardly any available in English. Therefore, the theories which will be presented are product development and introduction into general markets.
- For the empirical part, there is certain difficulty to approach the targeted group on which we intend to do the survey. This will be further explained in Section 4.2. Sampling.

Apart from the direct limitations mentioned above, being two foreign and fresh entrepreneurs brings us more challenges and difficulties to go through, which might possibly affect the accuracy of the results. But we are motivated and confident to try hard and achieve the best as we can.

## 2. JAPANESE CUISINE

In this chapter, you will find the set of key elements that build up a very distinctive Japanese cuisine, including its history and characteristics. In addition, a basic introduction of Japanese meals, cooking techniques and key ingredients is presented. Finally, an overall image of Japanese cuisine in Finland will be described.

### 2.1 The formation and development of Japanese cuisine

Japanese cuisine is formed and developed under a significant impact of the nation's geography and history. In this section, the establishment and elaboration of Japanese culinary arts will be briefly introduced based on these two great influences.

#### 2.1.1 Geographical impact

Japan is an island nation located in the Pacific Ocean, East Asia. The country is an archipelago of about 3600 islands, in which four main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu (Picture 1).



**Picture 1.** Map of Japan (Cellular Abroad Inc. n.d. )

The terrain of these islands is mainly mountainous, with steep mountains covering 80 percent of the islands' area. Due to the geographical influence, the Japanese 'lyrically refer to food as the delights or treasures of the seas and the mountains – *umi no sachi, yama no sachi*' (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 2).

There are three geographical features that help to form Japanese food culture. They are river valleys, mountains and seas. River valleys have contributed in defining the uniqueness of regional cuisines, as well as the availability of regional ingredients. As a barrier between regions, mountains also play a part in differentiating the characteristics of regional cuisines which together give variety to Japanese culinary art. In addition, mountains are the source of wild ingredients, such as mushrooms, vegetables and fruits, which are spiritually considered as a blessing from gods. Surrounded by a lot of bays and inland seas, the Japanese consume fish and fish products as one of their major ingredients. A lot of local cuisine has been created and spread all over the country based on the sea.

Not only influenced by the terrain, food of Japan also developed under the influence of climate. The areas of Japan spread over four climate zones, which bring to the country temperate seasons, varying from cold temperate climate in Hokkaido and northern as well as eastern Honshu, cool temperate climate in the rest of Honshu and Shikoku, to subtropical climate in Kyushu and the Okinawan islands. There are four seasons in Japan which is well defined: Spring comes around March and ends in May, following by monsoon season ends by July; summer lasts until October, then comes dry season ending in January in which winter begins. Seasons in Japan have an important influence to agriculture, especially the growth of rice which is hugely affected by monsoon rains. Seasons also contribute to the availability and quality of certain species of fish by defining a set of seasons in the seas. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 1-4)

### **2.1.2 Historical impact**

History of Japan can be divided into three main stages: the aristocratic stage (3<sup>th</sup> century C.E – 12<sup>th</sup> century), the Middle Ages (12<sup>th</sup> century – 1868), and the mod-

ern stage (1868 onwards). Accordingly, the development of Japanese foods is connected closely to these stages.

Since the earliest days, around 7000 B.C.E, when Japan entered the pre-aristocratic period, the Japanese lived on hunting and gathering. Their diet mainly included tubers and millets. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 5)

The aristocratic period was the time of remarkable change of Japanese food culture. Rice started to appear in Japanese daily meals in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, playing an important part in turning Japanese food as well as Japanese society into a new page. In general, foods were made in a simple way. However, with the gradual increase of wealth, the foods were prepared more complicatedly and attractively. Some new cooking and preservation methods, as well as ceramic technology were adapted from China, in which *miso* paste and chopsticks were introduced and become two important elements to Japanese food culture nowadays. With the growth of foods, chefs were highly respected, and becoming the cook of emperor was the mission that every chef would fight for. Parallel with foods, alcohol was very much favored during this period.

In 545 C.E, Buddhism was introduced to Japan by Korean. It soon became popular and affected the Japanese food culture in many ways. First was the elimination of meat from daily meals, then strict artistic principles and the use of color symbolism towards Japanese cuisine. Last but not least was the adaption of tea and tea ceremonies based on the Chinese way, especially in Buddhist temples and monasteries. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 5-7)

Samurai Period witnessed the blooming of Japanese food culture. This was the time when warlords showed their power and wealthy via arts and properties. Hence, foods were refined and became a form of arts rather than something to fulfill hunger. Especially, tea was more and more favored among the rich, with the establishment of tea ceremony founded by Sen-no-Rikkyu. Japanese tea ceremony is basically alike Chinese style but more developed in a fancier way. It involves

not only the flavor of tea, but also specific teawares used for the ritual, the surrounding settings and the attitude of tea enjoyer toward life.

Also during this period, Japanese cuisine received a new influence from Western culture, especially Portuguese. It was said that the Portuguese introduced *tempura* to Japan, which was later favored throughout the country. In 1600, Okinawa, which had been an independent kingdom in the south, was conquered and became a part of Japan. However, Okinawan cuisine has been preserving its distinction from typical Japanese flavor until today.

Throughout Edo era (1603 – 1867), Japan shut its door, stopping trading with foreign countries. This was the time for the Japanese to select the essence of different foreign cuisines to develop their own traditional unique. Many restaurants, stalls and carts were established, serving fast foods which focus more on speed, convenience and taste more than the look. It was the foundation of modern Japanese cuisine which could be enjoyed by anyone. It was in this period that *obentô* – Japanese box lunch and *sushi* were invented due to the frequent travel of people and the high demand of fresh fish in Japan. Also, some of specialties of regional cuisines became popular throughout the country. Along with the rising of restaurants and entertainment places, the consumption of tea and alcohol, especially *sake*, noticeably increased. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 7-11)

During Meiji Era (1868 – 1912), Japan started trading with outside again. Innovative movements and the Westernization in this period resulted in the increased consumption of meat and the import of new cooking ingredients. A new range of dishes which remain popular to this day were gradually introduced to Japanese cuisine, namely *tonkatsu* – breaded deep-fried pork, *kare raisu* – meat curry with rice, *shabu shabu* – Japanese hotpot, and *hayashi raisu* – beef hash with rice. Coffee, wine, beer and soft drinks also started to appear in Japan. Acknowledging of the poor state of nutrition, the Japanese, under the support of government, improved their diet by including more dairy products and fruit in their meals. However, in spite of a huge influence from Western food culture, Japan still main-

tained its traditional cooking and refined it by adapting some of Western cooking style. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003: 11-15)

In summary, along with the long history of nation formation, with the effects of different foreign culture, Japanese cuisine has gradually developed and finally found its own symbol. It is, according to Eric Pipert, the pure combination of ‘the light – the refinement after years of pursuing perfection, and the dark – the adherence to the old ways at all cost, the lack of innovation’ (Cowin 2009).

## **2.2 The fundamental characteristics of Japanese cuisine**

From the cultural point of view, five is an important number in Japan. Based on Chinese philosophy, this number represents for five elements of universe: water, fire, earth, wood, and metal (Brown & Brown 2006: 58). When it comes to Japanese cuisine, five is usually understood as five senses, five colors, five tastes, five ways and five attitudes, which altogether forms the fundamental characteristics of Japanese culinary arts. These characteristics have a great influence on many Japanese dishes and play as a core philosophy that many Japanese cooks follow when making their Japanese meal.

### **2.2.1 Five senses**

Adapting Buddhism philosophy of combining five senses to bring out the sixth sense into cooking, Japanese people tend to get taste, smell, sight, sound and touch involved to truly feel and appreciate their foods.

Of all, taste and smell are the two inevitable elements. They are elaborated by fresh, in season and high quality ingredients prepared with care and skill of a cook.

Not only smelling good and tasting good, Japanese food is also referred as a form of art. It ‘takes spatial beauty to new heights, placing emphasis on the three-dimensional form, colour and other visual aspects of food arrangement’ (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan [MAFF] n.d. a: 3). Indeed, Japanese people are very mindful in presenting their meal, by using a lot of attractive

colors and shapes for foods and matching them beautifully on different styles of tableware. Depending on the shape, color and texture of foods, tableware is chosen to bring out the best elements of these dishes while hiding the unwanted elements, as well as to be in harmony with the season.

Touching is another sense which is highly considered in Japanese cuisine. It means that the texture of the food should be varied, either in one dish or in one meal. Once again, the tableware plays an important role in enhancing the sense of touch. An example has been given by Sekiguchi as follows:

*‘Freshly cut bamboo chopsticks feel wonderfully cool to the touch, while smooth lacquerware feels warm. A rustic and sturdy stoneware serving dish might not be moved by the diner, but the suggestion of touch is still present.’* (Sekiguchi n.d.).

Last but not least is sound. In a Japanese meal, the dining background and atmosphere are very important. A quiet and relaxed place where the sound of nature can be heard could give a huge contribution in stimulating the exquisite taste of foods, hence offering the most enjoyable dining experience. (Sekiguchi n.d.: Five Senses section)

### **2.2.2 Five colors**

When Chinese culture and Buddhism came to Japan, they brought along the concept of five colors: black, white, red, green and yellow. As a part of Japanese culture, Japanese culinary art was also influenced by this concept.

According to Chinese color symbolism, these five colors represent not only for five elements of universe, but also for seasons in a year (Brown & Brown 2006: 58). Since food of Japan strongly emphasis on the season and its changing, this set of colors play a vital part in the choice of ingredients as well as food arrangement. Japanese *bento* could be a good example for this five-color characteristic. To make a *bento*, white rice are sprinkled with black sesame seeds, going with green beans or seaweeds, red cherry tomatoes, pickled ginger or pickled plum, slices of yellow omelettes and black soy sauce or sesame sauce.

The combination of these five colors would make a very healthy meal because a wide range of ingredients, especially fruits and vegetables are to be selected in order to get these natural colors. It also has a great effect in creating a lively and colorful meal, which is very important to the habit of ‘eating by eyes’ among the Japanese people. (Sekiguchi n.d.: Five Colors section)

### 2.2.3 Five tastes

In 1908, Dr. Kikunae Ikeda has announced a new taste that is distinguished from sweet, sour, salty and bitter. He named the new taste ‘*umami*’; and recently, it has been recognized as the fifth of five basic tastes.

‘*Umami* is the taste that underlie savoriness, and the most typical substance offering the *umami* taste is the amino acid glutamate’ (Ajinomoto Group 2008: 21) which can be found in plenty of foods such as meat, fish, dairy and some vegetables. In addition, the nucleotides inosinate in meat and fish, as well as the guanylate in mushroom also create the *umami* taste. It has been acknowledged that the combination of these types of substances release the most exquisite deliciousness of *umami*. Hence, this synergistic effect of *umami* encourages people to eat more balanced diets. ‘By increasing *umami* in food you can reduce the amount of cream, butter and oil’, said Kunio Tokuoka, the pioneering head chef of Kitcho Arashiyama (cited in Sims 2009: para. 18).

*Kaiseki* can be a perfect example for this remark. A *kaiseki* consisting of rich-*umami* ingredients such as seafood, shiitake mushroom, kelp, soy beans, seaweed, etc., can satisfy the same level of appetite as a high-standard Western tasting menu does with only half the calories. Because of this huge benefit, *umami* nowadays is highly considered in balancing and enhancing the favour of many dishes. (Ajinomoto Group 2008: 21; Sekiguchi n.d.: The Fifth Taste section)

Altogether, the five tastes have build up a typical flavor for Japanese cuisine. It is the harmony of sweet, sour, salty, bitter and *umami*. Each of them can be clearly distinguished, yet none of them dominate the others.

### 2.2.4 Five ways of preparation

With a plentiful variety of ingredients, Japanese people often use five different ways of preparation in their cooking to offer a diversity of texture and enhance flavour for many dishes. These methods consist of broiling, simmering, boiling, steaming and sautéing (see Chapter 4). Usually, four or five of them are employed in making a typical Japanese meal. Taking example of *ichiju sansai*– the most common meal in Japan, there are soup, rice and three side dishes which are prepared by three different cooking methods.

*‘One of the side dishes, called mukozuke, may feature sashimi. Another, called nimono, is made by simmering fish or vegetables in a unique Japanese stock made with dried bonito fish flakes and konbu - dried kelp. The third side dish, called yakimono, usually consists of fish, such as ayu - sweetfish, that has been salted and grilled’* (Trends in Japan 2007: Inspired by The Tea Ceremony section, para. 2).

The purpose of these incorporations is to balance the taste and texture throughout the whole dining experience. Moreover, it ensures a healthy and balanced diet, since most of these cooking methods are oil-free and tend to keep as much nutrient as possible. (Sekiguchi n.d.: Five Ways section)

### 2.2.5 Five attitudes

For the traditional Japanese people, especially the elder, five attitudes toward food should not be forgotten. These attitudes were originated from the Buddhist faith and can be seen in many temples as well as vegetarian restaurants in Japan. They are expressed in these five following phrases:

- *I reflect on the work that brings this food before me; let me see whence this food comes.*
- *I reflect on my imperfections, on whether I am deserving of this offering of food.*
- *Let me hold my mind free from preferences and greed.*
- *I take this food as an effective medicine to keep my body in good health.*

- *I accept this food so that I will fulfill my task of enlightenment*' (Yoneda 1982: 38)

Emphasizing the gratitude towards food, these phrases are usually recited before every meal in many Zen temples in Japan. This principle also explains the dining etiquette and tendency of Japanese people in preparing and consuming foods. As mentioned before, they use seasonal ingredients so as not to waste foods, and it will be very offensive if one does not finish his/her food completely. Besides, Japanese cuisine has been highly acknowledged as the reflection of the Japanese's soul. It is the exquisiteness in the simplicity. Every dish is prepared wholeheartedly and must be enjoyed respectfully. The dining background is also important. It should be calm and quiet enough not to distract the tension of diners towards their meal. And since Japanese people consider their foods as the effective medicine, they always have a very healthy diet. (Sekiguchi n.d.: Five Attitudes section)

### **2.3 Common cooking techniques in Japanese cuisine**

In Japanese cooking, there are five cooking methods which are widely used in preparing meals. They are *yaku* - broiling, *niru* - simmering, *yuderu* - boiling, *musu* - steaming and *itameru* - sautéing.

There are two traditional ways of making a *yaku* dish, which is broiling over a direct flame and broiling on a cast-iron skillet called *teppan*. The common ingredient for this cooking method is meat, which can be either marinated or broiled plain. The perfect *yaku* dish is when the inner part of the meat is just cooked, so that it has a juicy and tender texture.

The second cooking method is *niru*, where solid ingredients, such as roots, fish and meat, are simmered, braised or poached in a soup stock. To make soup stock, seasonings are added either before adding other ingredients, during cooking time or just before serving. The first method is usually for cooking fish or meat, while

the second one is for vegetables also, and the last method is mostly used when making *miso*-based stock.

Another cooking method is *yuderu* – boiling, used for different types of vegetables. Usually, to boil a certain amount of vegetable, a double amount of water is needed. Also, for every five cups of water, a quarter teaspoon of salt is added. Regardless of ingredients, there should be a cold water bowl ready for soaking, and vegetables should never be overcooked. These two points are very important to keep the vegetable shiny, fresh and crispy.

The fourth cooking method is *musu* – steaming. There are three ways for steaming in Japan. Ingredients can be steamed in a utensil called *mushiki* – round steamer, or *seiro* – rectangular steamer, over boiling water. While *mushiki* is made from bamboo, *seiro* can be made from bamboo or metal. Another steaming method is to wrap fish or meat, herb and vegetable tightly in leaves and bury them in ash or rocks around a fire. Fish or meat can also be steamed by being seared, then hung away from flame.

The final method is *itameru* – saut éng. In saut éng, ingredients should be cooked quickly on a heavy cast iron skillet. If sugar or soy sauce is used for seasoning, they should be added at last to avoid being burnt. Also, thin pan is not recommended for saut éng since its temperature drops when ingredients are added, and foods would be simmered instead of sautéed. In traditional cooking, *itameru* is usually combined with other cooking methods instead of finalizing a dish itself. For example, meat is slightly sautéed and added into soup stock for simmering. (Homma 1991: 105 – 108)

Among cooking methods, steaming and simmering are most used in Japan. These methods not only help in keeping the original taste but also preserve most of nutrients of ingredients. When preparing foods, the Japanese tend to use seasonal ingredients in order to ‘relish delectable flavors and the enchanting changes of the seasons throughout the year’ (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,

Japanese Government [MAFF] n.d. a: 2) without wasting highly nutritious ingredients.

#### **2.4 Key condiments of Japanese cuisine**

The delighted flavors of Japanese cuisine have been favored all over the world thanks for the use of many traditional condiments. The most used among them are *mirin*, *komesu*, *dashi*, soy sauce and *miso*, which are considered as the 'secret of Japanese cuisine'. Some other condiments in Japanese cooking are sesame seeds, sesame oil, *umeboshi* - pickled plum and *wasabi* - Japanese horseradish.

*Mirin* is the sweet cooking *sake* 'made from distilled spirit and *Aspergillus oryzae* mixed with rice. It helps enhancing the sweetness, therefore being used in marinating and glazing.

*Komesu* is Japanese rice vinegar, which is milder than other types. This is one of basic the ingredients in *sushi* rice and salad.

*Dashi* is the basic stock of Japanese cooking, basically made by soaking *kombu* – kelp sea vegetable, and *katsuobushi* – dried bonito flakes in water. It is used for soups, sauces and marinating.

Soy sauce and *miso* are all made of soybean. However, while soy sauce are made by fermenting soybeans and wheat in *koji* mould, *miso* is the result of the fermenting and aging process of soybeans and salt in *koji* mould. These two ingredients have been considered as the kings of Japanese seasoning, used for soups, dipping sauce and marinating several exquisite Japanese foods. ((Booth 2002: 15-17)

#### **2.5 Japanese meals**

A daily Japanese meal is called '*ichiju sansai*' which means 'one soup and three dishes'. As shown in the name, these meals typically include *miso* soup, three side dishes of meat, fish and vegetables, and rice. Side dishes may vary according to seasons and regions, as well as preferences of each family. *Ichiju sansai* model

can be applied to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Besides, *sushi* and noodles including *soba*, *udon* and *ramen* are other options for lunch. Dinner is usually heavier than the other meals, since this is the main meal in a day. There is a large variety of dishes to be served, varying from *washoku* to *yoshoku* and *chukka*. While *washoku ryori* is a term for authentic Japanese foods, *yoshoku ryori* and *chukka ryori*, accordingly, refer to domesticated Western cuisines and Chinese cuisines (Cwierka 2006: 49). Basically, they mean foreign foods in Japan modified to fit with local taste. For instance, *omuraisu* – rice wrapped in omelet served with ketchup, and *hayashi raisu* – hashed beef stew served with rice are of popular *yoshoku* dishes in Japan. *Gyoza* – Japanese dumpling, and *yakisoba* – Japanese stir-fried noodle, are some examples of *chukka ryori*. (Booth 2002: 34; Yoshizuka, n.d.: para. 2-5)

Written in many books and articles as a phenomenal representative of Japanese cuisine, *kaiseki* gathers all of the elements mentioned above in their highest level. There are 9 courses in a traditional *kaiseki* meal, shown in the following table:

	<b>COURSES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>APPETIZER</b>	Sakizuke	The first course served with first drink, usually <i>sake</i> .
	Hassun	The second course prepared with seasonal ingredients from mountain or sea to highlight the season.
	Mukozuke	<i>Sashimi</i> dish to emphasize the freshness of fish and the knife skills of chef.
<b>MAIN COURSE</b>	Futamono, Yakimono, Takia-wase.	The first main courses to emphasize the traditional cooking technique (steaming, grilling, simmering).
	Su-zakana	A small dish to clean the palate.
	Hiyashi-bachi	An assortment of simmered vegetable, chilled. Served only in summer.
	Naka-choko	Another cleansing dish
	Shiizakana	Another main course, usually substantial and exciting to demonstrate the high skill of chef.
	Gohan	A rice dish served with seasonal ingredients.
<b>DESSERT</b>	Mizumono	The seasonal dessert, usually fruits, ice-cream or traditional Japanese sweets.

**Table 1.** *Kaiseki* courses (Murata 2006).

As shown in Table 1, *kaiseki* starts with appetizers, continues with main courses and concludes with a dessert. The appetizer consists of three different courses: sakizuke, hassun and mukozuke. Sakizuke is referred to an avant-garde dish, which is for entertaining taste buds as well as showing the innovative level of the chef.

They are prepared in small portion, about two bites, and served along with *sake* as the first drink. The second course is *hassun* which sets the theme of the season. It is usually *sushi* with five or six small side dishes. Then, some slices of seasonal *sashimi* are offered for *mukozuke* course.

If the appetizers are for entertaining and giving a hint of season, main courses are all about cooking technique. *Futamono*, *yakimono* and *takiawase* are the first substantial dishes, usually fish or meat prepared in traditional ways, such as steaming, grilling and simmering. After that, a small plate of vinegared vegetables is served to cleanse the palate. Next is *hiyashi-bachi*, chilled simmered vegetable, which is available in summer only. *Naka-choko*, light and acidic soup, is another cleansing dish served before the last substantial dish of the meal, *shiizakana*. Very often, *shiizakana* comes as a hot pot dish consisting of different types of ingredients. Finally, as a part of main course, *gohan* is served. It can be cooked rice, steamed glutinous rice, or *sushi* rice served with seasonal ingredient. Dessert, usually seasonal fruit cocktail, ice-cream or traditional Japanese sweet comes last to conclude a *kaiseki* meal. (Murata 2006: 8, 11-13)

The most outstanding characteristic of *kaiseki* is that it is all about season. A true *kaiseki* meal should not only be able to give an exquisite look and taste, but also has to truly reflect the theme of season, because after all, enjoying *kaiseki* is, according to *kaiseki* chef Yoshihiro Murata, like ‘eating the season’ (Murata 2006: 12). Last but not least, the skills of the chef and the use of tableware play a very important part in bringing the meal to life. A qualified *kaiseki* chef not only has to be well trained for years to master the techniques, but also has to fully understand his/her ingredients as well as the process of making ceramic and pottery.

Unlike some other Japanese dishes which have been globalized, *kaiseki* represents Japanese cuisine as a ‘resolutely local, unique and un-exportable’ meal (Baker 2007, para.4). Even so, there are always innovations and creativities in *kaiseki*, since according to chef Murata, ‘tradition is something you break and rebuild at

the same time. If cuisine doesn't change, it won't be alive' (cited in Baker 2007: para. 11). (Baker 2007)

## 2.6 Table Manners and Etiquette

In Japan, different foods are served on different small plates in small portions. Each person has their own chopsticks and a rice bowl. As shown in Picture 2, when setting a table, rice bowl is placed on the left of diners and soup bowl is placed on the right of the diners. Chopsticks - *hashi*, are placed in front of these bowls, pointing to the left on a chopstick rest – *hashioki*, while the rest of the dishes are placed behind the bowls. (Simbo 2000: 3)



**Picture 2.** Standard Japanese table setting (Ajinomoto Group n.d.)

Deeply influenced by their culture, Japanese people are very attentive in behaving and showing manner. After all, Japanese culture is all about respect - respect for nature, respect for elder and ancestor, respect for religion, and so on. Table manner and dining etiquette is one of many rituals to symbolize for this cultural aspect. Based on five attitudes towards food (refer to Fundamental Characteristics of Japanese Food Culture chapter), the following practices set the most common and important dining etiquette in Japan.

In the beginning of a meal, the Japanese say 'itadaki-masu' and at the end of the meal, they say 'gochisou-sama' to express the gratitude to the person who prepares the foods as well as to start and end a meal. Also, guests show their respect to the host by always letting him/her start the meal. When eating, people usually keep quiet so that they can concentrate on their foods and enjoying the surrounding nature.

While using chopsticks, it is a taboo to pass foods from one's chopsticks to another's, since there is a similar practice in Japanese funerals. Besides, chopsticks must not be placed or speared standing up on foods and rice bowls because this is a traditional form of offering to ancestors. When picking foods from serving plates, if there is not any serving chopsticks, one should use the clean ends of his/her chopsticks to get the foods and use the other end to take foods to his/her mouth. In addition, to avoid dropping foods, it is common to lift a bowl of rice or soup close to the mouth when eating. Large pieces of foods can be cut into smaller bites by chopsticks or diners can bite a small piece and put the rest back to their bowl or plate. Unlike in some other cultures, slurping soup is considered as enjoying and is a very common habit in Japan. However, using chopsticks to shovel foods directly from bowls or plates into mouth is considered impolite. Also, one should never lick his/her chopsticks or point chopsticks at people for the same reason. (Shimbo 2000: 3-4)

## **2.7 *Sushi* and *Sashimi* – the pride of Japan**

Speaking of Japanese cuisine, probably the first thing coming into one's mind is *sushi* and *sashimi*. These dishes have long been the pride of Japanese people. Besides the marvelous flavor and texture, the whole Japanese food culture is reflected in them. It is the strict choice of fresh ingredients, the balance of tastes and the artful presentation of the dish.

'*Sushi* is a specific style of Japanese cuisine that combines vinegar seasoned rice with a variety of seafood and vegetables. The word "sushi" actually means "vinegar rice." "Su" is the Japanese word for vinegar and "Shi" is an abbreviation of the

word "*Meshi*," a colloquial name for cooked rice' (Advanced Fresh Concepts Corp. [AFC] n.d.: What is *Sushi* section).

Clearly stated in the explanation above, the most important ingredient in *sushi* is vinegar seasoned rice. Basically, the seasoning mixture consists of rice vinegar, sugar and salt combined in different proportions depending on personal taste. Sometimes, other ingredients are added to enhance the flavor, such as *kombu* and/or mirin.

In general, there are six types of sushi made in different ways and shapes. The most popular forms are *maki sushi* and *nigiri sushi*. Besides, *gunkan*, *temaki*, *chirashi* and *inarizushi* are the other types of sushi. Based on information given by Heiter and Schultz (Heiter & Schultz 2007: 53-54), illustrations and explanations for each *sushi* types are shown in the pictures below:



*Maki sushi* is a roll consisting of sushi rice spread equally on a roasted seaweed sheet called *nori* and filled with seafood, meat or poultry and/or vegetable. It is then cut into six bite-sized pieces.

**Picture 3.** Maki sushi (Roppongi Fukuzushi n.d.)



*Nigiri sushi*, also called *Edo-mae sushi*, is simply a sushi rice ball formed by hand with a slice of seafood or vegetables on top. It is usually served in a pair.

**Picture 4.** Nigiri sushi (Roppongi Fukuzushi n.d.)



*Gunkan*, which means ‘battleship’, is small sushi-rice ball covered by a small stripe of *nori* and filled with soft ingredients, such as fish roe, on top. The *nori* stripe should be a bit higher than the rice ball to be able to hold the topping.

**Picture 5.** Gunkan (Roppongi Fukuzushi n.d.)



*Temaki* is a term for hand-rolled sushi which has the same ingredients used in *maki sushi* wrapped in a cone-shaped *nori*.

**Picture 6.** Temaki (Misato Restaurant n.d.)



*Inari sushi* is a small ball of sushi rice filled in a deep-fried soybean.

**Picture 7.** Inarizushi (Kanakano’s Kitchen 2010)



*Chirashi* is a bowl of sushi rice topped with the same ingredients used in other sushi types.

**Picture 8.** Chirashi (Ozora Sushi Restaurant n.d.)

In spite of their popularity, there has been confusion between *sushi* and sashimi. It should be noticed that *sashimi* and *sushi* are two different types of food. While the main ingredient of *sushi* is *sushi* rice combined with raw fish or seafood, *sashimi* is simply a slice of raw fish or seafood dipped in *wasabi* and soy sauce (Picture 11).



**Picture 9.** Sashimi (Fuji Mountain Japanese Restaurant n.d.)

The most interesting part of *sashimi* lies on its beautiful presentation. It can be said that *sashimi* is the piece of arts showing the skillfulness and precision of the Japanese in executing raw fish and other seafood ingredients. It requires a high level of profession in handling and preserving in order to ensure the hygiene and sanitary requirement, as well as the best flavor of the dish.

Traditionally, *sushi* and *sashimi* are served with *gari*– pickled ginger slice, and *wasabi* - Japanese horseradish. While *gari* helps refresh the palate between different types of sushi, *wasabi* is believed to kill parasites in raw fish and enhance the flavour for sushi. Also, a plate of soy sauce is provided for dipping. It is recommended that *wasabi* should not be mixed in soy sauce since the two distinct tastes would be diluted. Instead, a small amount of *wasabi* can be placed on a piece of *sushi* and then dipped into soy sauce. There is also a proper way to eat sushi. Firstly, pick up a piece of *sushi* with fingers or chopsticks. Then, turn over the piece so that its topping or *nori* is dipped into soy sauce. Finally, enjoy *sushi* with the topping touching the tongue first.

There is a common mistake that rice is dipped into soy sauce instead of the topping. This is an incorrect way since both flavours of topping and rice would be obliterated, and the rice would fall apart easily. In addition, while preparing sushi, it should be kept in mind that *sushi* ingredients, especially raw fish, must not be left at room temperature for too long. However, it is not recommended to keep *sushi* rice in refrigerator since its starchiness and stickiness would be affected and the rice becomes harder. After seasoned with vinegar mixture, *sushi* rice should be within one day. In summary, it is the best to enjoy *sushi* right after it is made or within 2-3 hours at the latest. (Dekura, Treloar & Yoshii 2005: 12-14)

Due to its diversity in every aspect, such as ingredients, sizes and shapes, *sushi* and *sashimi* is suitable for every course as well as every occasion. A small roll of makizushi or a pair of nigirizushi can be served as a starter, or a big plate of *sushi* with different styles or flavours can be a very attractive main course. It can be an option for a formal dinner to a very casual picnic. To bring up a full enjoyment, green tea is traditionally served with sushi. It is said to help removing aftertaste and refresh the palate. Light beer and *sake* are other popular options to drink with sushi. While green tea is always served hot, *sake* can be served hot (40oC – 50oC) or cold. A warm wet hand towel is also provided in case *sushi* is eaten by fingers. (Dekura, Treloar & Yoshii 2005: 14-16)

## 2.8 Japanese Cuisine in Finland

Since the first appearance in Helsinki couple of years ago, Japanese foods have got more and more popular and become 'a firm favourite on Finnish menu' (Gairn 2009). In fact, it is very interesting that Japanese cuisine and Finnish cuisine share some common characteristics with each other, namely the use of seasonal ingredients and simple cooking methods.

'Much traditional Finnish cooking relies on the seasons. In winter soups, stews and casseroles are prepared, while in summer time fresh fruits and vegetables are served with as little cooking as possible. Finns take advantage of the fresh harvest of the brief summer.'(Previdi 1995: 17)

In addition, both Japanese people and Finnish people follow the simplicity in making their meals. Cooking methods should be chosen so that the clean and clear flavor of ingredients is preserved and 'only ingredients that make a strong contribution to the taste of the food should be added' (Previdi 1995: 17). Similar to Japanese cuisine, ingredients from sea and forest are among the most favoured in Finnish cooking.

With these similarities, Japanese cuisine has an easier way into Finnish culture. In recent years, there has been a growth of Japanese restaurants in big cities in Finland, such as Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. Japanese ingredients are also gradually being sold in oriental grocery stores and supermarkets across Finland. As a matter of fact, public media and travelling habits have a certain contribution in bringing Japanese culture and Japanese food to Finnish people as well. There have been a lot of articles written about Japanese foods and some of its recipes in Finnish magazines and newspapers. Many Finns who have tasted Japanese foods elsewhere also attempt to make it themselves for family and friends. Nowadays, Finns, especially young Finns, are more open to new things and new cultures. And it has encouraged them to try out the new cuisine which is so interesting and elegant.

Japanese foods, namely sushi, have become famous and trendy not only in Finland, but also in many other countries in the world, due to the fact that it can easily fit into any diet. Most Japanese dishes are lactose-free and gluten-free. They are low calorie and have a lot of health benefits, such as anti-aging and preventing cancer. Like many other Asian cuisine in Finland, Japanese foods can be slightly modified to fit with personal taste or made in Finnish way. However, while some of Japanese dishes may be difficult to make for non-Japanese people, *sushi* is somehow a 'global food' which can be prepared easily in many styles. There is no limitation in ingredients for sushi, which means it fits for any tastes and any preference. If a person cannot eat fish or does not like fish, he or she can opt for vegetarian sushi. If a Finn likes reindeer, he or she can make a roll of *sushi* with reindeer, lingonberry jam and pickles. In fact, a lot of famous *sushi* rolls, such as California and Spicy Tuna, are not originally from Japan. Also, since making *sushi* does not require so much cooking, it is fast, fresh and fun to make.

In spite of the rising popularity of Japanese cuisine in Finland, making a Japanese dish can be sometimes a challenging job for many Finnish people, especially when the ingredients called for in the recipes are not available. Even though nowadays, some of Japanese condiments and food products can be found in supermarkets and oriental grocery stores across Finland, the product range is still very limited. It could be a bit easier to get a hand on most Japanese ingredients in Helsinki, but it is nearly impossible to find them in other areas in Finland, unless they are ordered from the internet.

Besides, the lack of knowledge in using the ingredients is another challenge to many Finnish people who want to cook Japanese food. Firstly, most Japanese dishes can take time and effort to prepare. In addition, a wrong way of using ingredients can lead to a totally different result. Taking as an example, cooking *sushi* rice seems to be a simple job, but in fact, it requires quite a lot experience to cook perfect rice, which is not too soft or too dry. Or if a person does not know how to use *miso* paste, it could turn out to be grainy and not so pleasant in taste. Bearing in mind that Japanese ingredients generally are quite expensive, some

people might find it not worth wasting their money and effort in making a Japanese meal.

## 2.9 Conclusion

In summary, Japanese food culture is the result of learning and filtering process from different foreign food cultures. However, it is the beauty of Japanese tradition and people that make its cuisine special and unique. The attraction of Japanese foods lies on the combination of many factors: ingredients, cooking techniques, tableware, location and time. Each of them is taken into consideration carefully and thoughtfully, following the concept of simplicity makes fantasy. This makes the Japanese cuisine outstanding and artistic with a perfect blend of flavors and colors, as well as one of the healthiest foods in the world.

With all of the mentioned benefits and advantages of Japanese cuisine, as well as its similarities with Finnish food culture, Japanese foods are growing their popularity in Finland and becoming one favorite option for many Finns. Thanks for many forms of media, especially the internet, Finnish people have more opportunities to get to know the culture and food, as well as knowledge in Japanese cooking. In addition, when Japanese cuisine gets more familiar in Finland, people will feel more comfortable in adapting the cuisine into their daily diet. Moreover, when the demand for Japanese ingredients increase, there would be more supply and hence, the lack of ingredients will soon not be a problem.

In spite of many benefits, it should be noticed that Japanese diet does have disadvantages. Due to the high use of fermented products in cooking, namely *miso* paste and soy sauce, Japanese diet is rather high in sodium, which is not so good for health. In addition, the availability of protein and dairy products in a traditional Japanese meal is quite low, which leads to an unbalanced diet and hence, limits the body growth. Being aware of these negative effects, it is the best to wisely adapt Japanese cooking style into Finnish cuisine instead of totally switching from one to another.

### **3. NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the theoretical background from the marketing point of view of our business and study, which is new product development and introduction. As our restaurant is the first sushi and Japanese restaurant in Vaasa, it is important to acquire the knowledge about developing and bringing new food product into a market. The chapter will present some general rules and theories about NPDI (New Product Development and Introduction) and, when applicable, explain the characters and situation in the local/targeted market of the restaurant. Because of the fact that drawing up a business plan highly depends on both theories as well as primary and secondary data collected, in this theoretical part, some results from our survey will be presented and used as theoretical backups for the final business plan.

#### **3.1 Understanding New Product Development and Introduction**

The definition of NPDI does not vary much from different researchers. It basically refers to the whole process of bringing a new product or service into a market. As indicated by the name, the term consists of two major aspects, one concerns the development of the new product, which involves generating the idea, designing the product and engineering the detail; the other aspect concerns the introduction of the new product, i.e. the marketing of the new product. (Barclay, 2000)

The generation of an idea for a new food product mainly comes from three types of sources. The first one is the marketplace which provides information for customer and consumer needs, buying habits and distribution requirements. The second is within the company where it is mostly for the ultimate purpose of minimize the costs and wastes and maximize the profit, e.g. new product which allows to recycle and reuse by-products more productively and efficiently. The last but not the least source is outside the marketplace, for instance advance in science, technology and nutritional knowledge, emergence of new materials, ingredients and equipments, as well as new governmental food legislations, etc. (Fuller, 2004)

It is relatively easy to come up with a new food product idea. However, a working idea which ensures the new product to enter and stay in the marketplace must fit certain criteria. It should be attractive to customers and meet the needs and desires of consumers. It should also be within the skill level, technical capabilities, and managerial and financial resources of the producing company. In other words, the idea should be both product- and consumer-oriented; and the new product should be at the same time producer-, technology- and consumer-driven. (Fuller, 2004)

Added value, meaning the degree of innovation or change that makes a product more desirable to customers and consumers, is a characteristic that many new products are supposed to have. Whatever the value is, namely improved stability, improved functionality, better colour, better texture, or better service or convenience, it should be something that consumers want. For example, potatoes used to be only packed in bulk as 100-lb sacks and sold in grocery stores. It might have been practical when people were mostly having their own houses with a cellar, and would like to store and to eat the potatoes for a long time. However, it would not be the case anymore nowadays for small or mostly all types of households living in apartments limited storage space, and people would generally prefer less potato-focused meals. Then here comes the small packed potatoes, pre-peeled potatoes, half-cooked French fries, sorted potato varieties for different cooking methods, etc. with great added values to the consumers. (Gorden W. Fuller, 2004:9-10)

### **3.2 Different newness**

The term *new product* involved in this concept embraces and covers a huge different levels of 'newness', from 'products that are completely new to the world to minor modifications'. (Barclay et al., 2000:12) It can either be one that is new to the market place or new to the particular developer company, or, an existing product that has been improved.

In Fuller's book *New Food Product Development: from concept to marketplace, 2004*, he categorised new products into seven groups according to the distinctive

‘newness’ they carry. They will be listed and explained, and in each category how it fits our new product development of sushi and Japanese food will also be illustrated.

1) Line extensions

Line extensions are variants of a family of similarly positioned products. And these types of new products are more of the same as the existing ones. E.g. New flavours for a snack product

Sushi has its existence in the market of Vaasa; however the types of sushi offered are not the same from supplier to supplier. Other suppliers may offer certain types that we do not and for sure we also have what they do not offer. For example, one type of maki sushi on our menu was created when we were making sushi at home with a visiting sushi-loving friend. The flavour is new and the sushi was named after the friend, which is for sure not available from other suppliers.

2) Repositioned existing products

These are the new products based on a whole new use for an existing product, which may allow a whole new market direction to be taken. E.g. Oatmeal-containing products positioned as dietary factors in reducing cholesterol

Though there has been sushi available in Vaasa as take-away food or as party snack, there has not been any restaurant which has sushi constantly on its menu and sushi has not been offered as a restaurant product in any kind. Now the fact that we offer sushi as a restaurant product based on a new use of the product in a new market direction are considered to be repositioning existing products.

3) New form or size of existing products

This is simply putting an existing product into a new form. The modification over the old form should be perceived by the customers and consumers as an advantage.

E.g. Instant coffees, teas, and flavoured coffees

The nigiri sushi that we are making could be considered as a ‘new form or size of existing products.’ The rice balls we make for nigiri sushi are generally bigger than in normal sushi restaurants. Because we want to offer good value for how much our customers spend, instead of offering small pieces so that they are forced to purchase more than what they intend to afford.

#### 4) Reformulation of existing products

This includes all kinds of changes in the manufacturing process, such as the results of better colour, flavour, texture, fewer calories, etc. ; a raw material used is replaced by another; improved processes brought by new technologies to lower the costs.

E.g. Lactose-free milk products

The raw ingredients we use could not be exactly of the same origin and characters as our competitors. And all the recipes we have in our restaurant, for both sushi and warm dishes, are developed by ourselves from the original version we found from various sources, i.e. reformulation of existing products. The preparing and cooking techniques and procedures are also developed at the same time.

#### 5) New packaging of existing products

The changes of packaging from different aspects fall into this category. It could be about the form such as packaging of bulk produce into unit packages; or using new materials, for instance, from metal to glass containers or innovative usage of bio-based materials.

E.g. Single serve sizes of yoghurt

As mentioned earlier, sushi has been offered either packed in boxed in retailing stores or readymade to take home, also boxed, and never constantly in a restaurant as a food choice to be ordered, produced and served on plates; and we are the first serving the sushi in this way, or in the particular term, this ‘package’.

#### 6) Creative products

A creative product is defined as one newly brought into existence, a rare and never-seen before product.

E.g. Short-chain fatty acid-containing products; many of the basic ingredients used in Asian cuisine including surimi (crab stick), kamaboko (fish cake), and tofu were creative products at their first presence.

Sushi cannot really be seen here as a creative product since there are already other types of sushi suppliers in Vaasa and it is not a never-seen product in this market, but Japanese food is indeed never-seen in this market. Therefore, we are also bringing *creative product*.

#### 7) Innovative products

An innovative product is one resulting from making changes to an existing product. New ingredients can form the base for innovative products.

E.g. A dinner kit made by putting together canned tomato sauce, dried spaghetti sauce spices, and dry pasta; simulated crab legs, lobster chucks, shrimp and scallops based on surimi technology

In this case, the *yakisoba sauce* used in Oishi Yapan for cooking *yakisoba* should be introduced. It was developed by putting together two different existing *yakisoba sauces* we found from the Internet, one relatively more sweet and one more sour, till the optimal flavour is achieved. We assume that this sauce is an innovative product in our restaurant.

### **3.3 Need for new products in food marketplaces**

The reasons for undertaking new product development will be introduced under four main areas: corporate reasons, market and marketplace reasons, technological pressure and governmental influences. This theory is again based on Fuller's work in 2004, which is considered to be a very comprehensive conclusion that includes all the possible reasons for each new product development project. This section will list and explain these reasons based on Fuller's theory for new food product

development and introduction. Those which are relatively more relevant to our study will be illustrated in more detail.

### **3.3.1 Corporate reasons**

New product development is essential for a brand or a manufacturer to survive because all products have their own life cycles, their demands fade away finally and they need to be either replaced or renovated to continue meeting customers' changing needs. In order to survive and succeed in the business, it requires a company to constantly fulfil its customers and consumers' needs. However, for various reasons such needs exist on a changing base, especially in food business, which will be explained in the following section, and hence all products have their life cycle. Therefore, new products should be developed and brought to the market to fulfil the changing demands. (Barclay et al., 2000)

In food business, companies can achieve growth in a limited ways, such as expanding into new geographic markets, achieving greater market penetration with a greater market share in existing markets, developing new products, etc. The first two means could be risky because of the existing competitors and completely different consumers with unfamiliar needs in the targeted new area, or costly in advertising and promotion. Developing new products can both open up new markets and contribute to growth, profitability and brands expanding. Though there is cost for their development and marketing to consider, the domination of competitors and the risk and the requirements to overcome it could be omitted.

For example, if a food plant or premises operates seasonally or has a slack season, developing new products for the low season puts the underutilized facilities to work and brings extra profit than running just the old ones. 'This keeps trained workers employed throughout the year, reduced plant overhead, provides a more steady cash flow, and benefits the community.' (Fuller, 2004) Of course this does not always apply to premises which totally depend on the natural seasons. For instance, beach resort restaurants relying on the weather of the summer really

cannot get much help from new product development for the winter when there is hardly any chance to create any kind of demand.

### **3.3.2 Market and Marketplace reasons**

#### *Marketplace ≠ Market*

Market and marketplace are often confused with each other, though strictly speaking each of them has its own unique meaning.

Market is a conceptual indication of the customers' and consumers' needs that marketing personnel discover and manufacturers try to fulfil with their products. Saying that there is a market for certain goods, for example, organically grown vegetables and low/calorie foods, means that there are consumers and customers in different marketplaces who are willing or need to purchase such products. (Fuller, 2004)

Marketplaces are where the products are sold; they are not conceptual but real tangible entities, from coin-operated food vending machines to giant grocery stores, roadside food stands to gourmet fine-dining restaurants. Though a fish market or a farmers' market is called so, it's a physical marketplace instead of the conceptual market. (Fuller, 2004)

#### *Market reasons and food choices*

Market reasons, according to the concept of *market* explained above, indicates naturally the consumers and customers' needs for a new product. The profile of customers and consumers in food business is altering constantly, which is closely related to their various food choices and dining habits. The factors that lead to this include the following.

First, with the population movement and the growth of immigration, new settlers with different ethnic backgrounds bring changes into the neighbourhoods with their own food habits. This not only causes more food and dining needs from their

own parts but also influences the indigenous' food habits and within certain limit reshapes their needs. (Fuller,2004)

Secondly, the trend of food is changing constantly. Although it does not happen as fast as in the clothing fashion world where new designs replace the old ones merely after a season, such phenomenon in food business as a new trend formed by new types of food, food concepts or dining fashions also occurs with an increasingly rapid pace. Some of the trends are conceptual inspired by some factors that are paid more attention to, for instance healthy, ecological or personalized food items. Some are more of a social and economical phenomenon, for example some newly emerged ethnic cuisine or one particular food material is welcomed by the first consumers, then the food suppliers will make it dominant in the market until its place is taken by another. (Rappoport,2003)

Take my own observation in China as an example, the food trends shaped by the 'new ingredient hits' have seen a rapid rotation during the last few years. And different regions of the country have their own fashions. Two years before I came to Finland, which was almost seven years from now, my city was packed with restaurants offering some 'Mr Zhang's grilling fish', followed by the next year when 'spicy crayfish hotpot' was a favourite food for the eating-out people to choose as well as restaurateurs to offer. Seven years later when I visited in China again, I found out that people at that time were fond of eating 'hotpot with sheep's chine bone' in the city. At the same time I heard from my father that in the southern coastal area the trend leading food was 'hotpot with chicken and pig belly', while my friends and other family members in my city had hardly heard of such food. Therefore, I assume that other regions of China, certainly of the world too, are altering their own food trends in their own paces.

Moreover, the food concept is altering constantly, which shapes and reshapes what people expect from what they eat. It has been proven and acknowledged by all professionals in the food business a fact that 'what consumers want from food is good taste, good health, and convenience'. (Rappoport, 2003:183) However,

things never easily go perfect; not all of these three desired factors are easily found in one type of food and in most cases/foods, at least one is missing. Fast foods are always tasty and convenient but not healthy; salads are healthy and convenient but not satisfying to every mouth; different pastas could be both tasty and healthy but are not really convenient. Therefore, the result has always been some kind of trade-off. And time has seen the rotation of such trade-offs; during the 1980s, the food industry began to emphasize healthy meals and food product, which was overtaken by the taste and convenience in the 90s. And nowadays, healthiness and convenience seems to be more appreciated more than tastes, although there is increasingly greater possibility of pursuing all of the three factors with the advancing techniques of preparing, preserving and distributing of foods, only that it would be more costly. (Rappoport, 2003)

For instance, the acceptance popularization of sushi in the US has undergone several stages and was finally accepted with a new food concept. At first, unlike other ethnic foods in America, sushi was not a cheap, tasty and easy alternative. 'In large part because of its celebrated aesthetics, Japanese food was always seen as fussy haute cuisine' (Issenberg, 2007:93) and this had slowed down its acceptance. Tuna in sushi was 'a robust red, straight from the ocean, served in fillets, meticulously sliced, untreated, and heralded for a clean fish taste' (Issenberg, 2007:94). In the 1960s, eating raw tuna 'was seen as exotic and even distasteful to Americans'. (Carroll, 2009:454) Attitudes toward sushi began to change with the emergence of a new concept for food to be 'fresh ingredients used simply' (Issenberg, 2007:96). And sushi, because of its use of fresh ingredients, began to appeal to Southern Californians, as 'a thin ideal of beauty inspired a diet craze, and sushi met every standard for being both healthful and light. Above all, sushi was seen as 'a diet food without social cost' (Issenberg, 2007:97). And the following opening-ups of sushi restaurant around California and other cities around North America were also based on this increasingly valued food perception.

Then we come down to the market targeted in this study, Finland and people's choice of food here. Besides the common marketing phenomenon, Finnish food

business, like all markets in other ethnics and nations, has its own traditions and characters. The food materials rely greatly on the country's natural resources – large consumption of fish both from the sea and its enormous amount of, over 180000, lakes; desserts and pastries consisting of different types of berries and forest fruits from the woods that covers up to 70% of the country (Finnish Forest Association, n.d.); also healthy foods with low-processed natural ingredients such as oatmeal and rye bread sandwich is most common for breakfast. In Finnish cuisine there are not really various fancy cooking techniques; raw materials are normally processed to a moderate to low extent and cooked in simple ways. (Visit Finland, n.d.) In a word, Finns have a strong value about eating natural, simple and healthy in their traditional food choice.

However, recently some young Finn has argued that the fast and unhealthy food trend today has reduced people using and eating fish in everyday life. The emergence of fish-based sushi and Japanese food might bring back a healthier eating trend to Finland. Food recommendations concerning nutrition and fat intake suggest that fish meal should be eaten at least twice per week including different types of fishes. Though fat should not be used too much because of the energy it carries, we cannot leave it out because we need essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins. In this case the usage of soft and unsaturated fat, which is largely found from fish, can even increase. (National Nutrition Council, n.d.) Thus obviously sushi is in many ways in a favourable element in the pursuit of a healthier diet for Finnish people.

In a word, there are a number of reasons convincing that sushi and Japanese food would be welcomed in Finnish food market. Finnish and Japanese food culture share quite important similarities. They are both characterized with freshness, simplicity and original tastes of ingredients. Fish as a raw ingredient plays a major part in both food cultures. Although in Finland fish is not consumed so raw and fresh as it is in Japan, Finns also are used to and fond of uncooked fish ingredients such as smoked salmon, salted salmon and herring and marinated herring with different flavours.

### *Marketplace reasons*

Marketplaces, no matter where they are, change with the customers and consumers' ethnic make-up, income, education and lifestyle. These factors decide for food industry and its product development what to offer to the market and where to place the products to best meet the targeted needs. Another influential factor in the marketplaces is the competition. The launch of an improved product requires the suffering in sales from the competitors who offer similar products. (Rappoport, 2003) It is tactical for a corporate to study the products on the market and different marketplaces, and try to find out and fill in the niches.

### **3.3.3 Technological pressures**

Technological development has also pushed the needs for new products in various industries. In food business, technology-related influences are shown mostly in three aspects: the consumers' awareness of health and roles of food products, the improvement in production methods and products from food manufacturers, as well as the globalization which brings new interests and demands. (Fuller, 2004)

With the help of technology, new knowledge about the physical and biological worlds existing in daily life and food consumption revealed and provided by scientists is increasingly easily recognized by all food product consumers. They have become more and more concerned about their health and role of food and nutrition in their food and in the prevention of disease. For example, shoppers are becoming more discriminating with the help of food nutrition labelling, information about meal planning and recipes for various needs for diets and health. Therefore, the traditional products are not fully satisfying anymore and they need to somehow evolve or be replaced in order to meet the advancing demands from the consumers. (Fuller, 2004)

Manufacturers are able to develop their products with better stability, quality and nutrition without degrading the texture, colour and flavour of the food under the help of technological development. And foods with various functions, e.g. to pre-

vent cancer and heart disease, delaying age and cure depression, or containing extra nutrition such as calcium, fibre and all kinds of vitamins are produced. Social scientists have developed better techniques to research and understand customer and consumer behaviour and emotions. And so retailers are able to acquire important knowledge about consumers' and buyers' behaviour, and plan the effective marketing strategy to attract customers. (Fuller, 2004)

Technological advancement brought a globalizing phase into every industry. In food business, for instance, ethnic restaurants, shops and food products are not only available but also needed, in all marketplaces now in almost every corner of the world. This could result from the convenience of getting access and interested in different cultures and hoping to have that cultural experience at homeland, and the easiest and most practical way to bring this experience is the ethnic foods. But mostly it should thank to the immigrants who are spreading their cuisine outside their lands. (Fuller, 2004)

In our case, the advancement of technology also somehow contributes to the acceptance and welcome of sushi and Japanese food in a foreign land. In this rapid information sharing era, people get to know about the freshness and nutrition of sushi before trying it, and to understand the tastiness and healthiness of Japanese food without visiting Japan. The general trend of pursuing more healthiness from food is also spreading fast at the same time. This awakes curiosity and increases the possibility that people will realise sushi and Japanese food is something to introduce into own diet to fulfill the need for healthiness.

#### **3.3.4 Governmental influences**

Governmental influences on food industry and new food products development and industry mainly appear in the sense of controlling and regulating on safety of food supply, quality control, fair trading practices and competition. For example, the health policies in a country provide the nutritional guidelines for manufacturing and labelling. Food companies should adopt such guidelines as company policies and, if necessary, reformulate their products. (Fuller, 2004)

### **3.4 Product development in a restaurant**

#### **3.4.1 General development**

When developing new food products for a restaurant, the following aspects should be taken into consideration carefully.

1) Clientele

It is important to decide the target, the customers that the restaurant aiming to cater to, and understand what they seek for when eating in a restaurant. Consumers in high-class restaurants are looking for quality of taste, service, presentation, atmosphere, and relaxation. They are less likely concerned how much they pay but the quality and service that they are paying for. On the contrary, consumers buying from a street vendor look for cheap, fair and safe food.

2) Food Preparation and Storage Facilities

The choice and installation of facilities and equipments needed, e.g. warming units or steamers or fryers or specialty wood stoves, smokers or microwave ovens or woks, potato peelers or grinders or slicers, walk-in freezers or refrigerators, depends on the type of the restaurant. Five-star restaurants, family-style restaurants, ethnic restaurants, hotel kitchens of different types, fast food franchises, or bars serving simple hot foods definitely need drastically different food preparation equipments.

The design and formulation of the menu products should correspond to the reasonable preparation and storage facility as well as the general kitchen condition, including the temperature, on the premises. Of course, new equipment can always be added to the property if needed for instance for a new menu product, but with serious consideration if it would be an affordable and profitable decision.

### 3) Labour

Similar to the equipment and facilities of the restaurants, the labour and the food products should also accord with each other. Different types of restaurants require labourers, especially cooks, with highly variable skills and knowledge. Generally, the design of food components and formulation used in preparation should ideally:

- be kept practical, safe and simple
- require the minimal amount of labour for their preparation
- produce the least amount of waste

### 4) Price, Quality, Consistency and Safety

The price is mostly regulated by what the targeted customers want to pay, as well as all kinds of costs: raw material and ingredients costs, labour-related costs and site-related costs.

Quality must always be consistent with the price. A quality control plan and system should be established to ensure and reinforce them. Especially in a chain, the quality and service must not vary from restaurant to restaurant.

Food poisoning, intoxication and allergic reactions of consumers are major hazards in the food service industry. A HACCP plan, or a comprehensive in-house control plan of any type, is recommended to be composed for each restaurant.

Customers may have special preference and requirements to the food. Food products and menu design in restaurants must take into consideration potential allergenic ingredients and preferably also special diets such as for vegetarians and vegans. It would be very favourable to specify in the menu different alternatives and specialties if applicable.

## 5) Nutrition

Although traditionally nutrition is not high on the customers' priority list when eating out in restaurants for a social event or business or pleasure, the growing problems with obesity and the diseases brought by it as well as the awaking awareness of health and increasing importance attached to eating healthily has spread among the nowadays diners and it would contribute bonus credits to a restaurant if it promotes the products with some features of healthiness. (Fuller, 2004)

### 3.4.2 Menu development and analysis

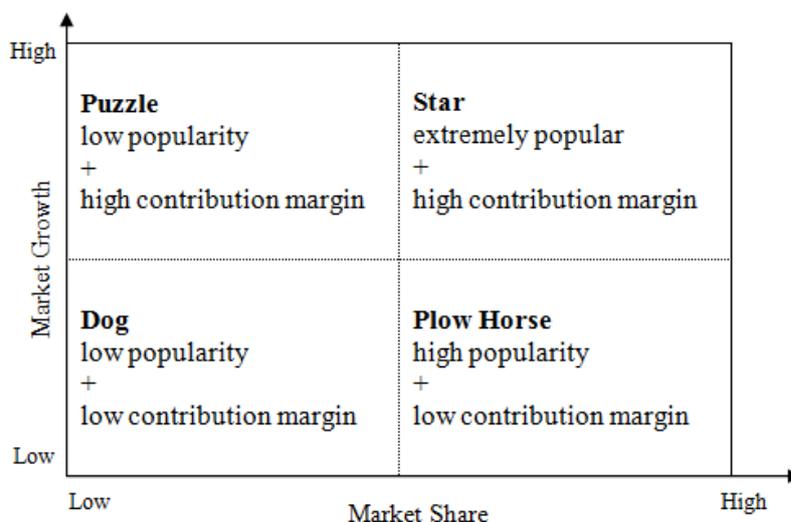
The menu is one of the most important aspects for the success of any foodservice establishment. Perhaps it is arguably the soul of the restaurant. Traditionally, menus are believed to be 'statements of the food and- beverage items provided by a foodservice establishment, primarily based on consumer needs and/or demands and designed to achieve organisational objectives'. (Khan, 1991:40) A new concept of menu argues that 'menus are more than the conventional function of a communications and selling tool but also a research and experimentation device that can be studied to increase restaurant profit'. (Seaberg, 1991)

Figure 1 below shows a comprehensive procedure of menu developing, consisting of a 'thorough research and analysis of the various elements from the restaurant's objectives and strategies to the bureaucratic processes of menu planning, selection, design, pricing and analysis'. (Mazalan, 2000) However, once a menu is developed and launched, it needs to be periodically reviewed for its effectiveness and performance. Therefore, this process is actually an endless cycle of research and analysis which finds out what is going on in the market and determines which dishes need further assessment. This periodical review is known as menu analysis that determines the success of the menu performance. (Mazalan, 2000)

Marketing Objective >>>	Service objectives and strategy	<<< Environmental analysis
Internal sources >>>	Idea generation and screening	<<< Magazines / competitors /etc.
Budget development >>>	Menu framework development	
Dish cost development >>>	Menu item screening	<<< Market assessment
Yield testing >>>	Menu item design and testing	<<< Consumer taste panel
Operational personnel >>>	Operational testing	
	Market testing	<<< Consumers
	Launch new menu	<<< Consumers
Menu analysis >>>	Review menu effectiveness	

**Figure 1** Model of New Menu Development (Mazalan, 2000)

One of the most common and explicit methods of menu analysis is based on the BCG-matrix and determines the relative performance of each menu item by assigning each one of the following items, Star, Plow Horse/Cash Cow, Puzzle, or Dog. (Figure 2) The assessed performance of each item indicates what should be done to them. The Plow Horses should be invested continuously but with little amount of money. Stars require a lot of investment to maintain their lead. Puzzles require investments to grow but whether they will succeed and become stars is unknown. Dogs should normally be liquidated if there is little prospect for it to gain market share. (Henderson, 1968)



**Figure 2** BCG Matrix (Henderson, 1968)

### 3.5 Marketing Strategy Development

#### 3.5.1 The development guideline

In order to succeed in introducing a new product into the desired market, a practicable and reliable marketing strategy should be developed according to the characters of the targeted market, the product concept, and the relationship between the new product and the market. Conducting a thorough market analysis is somehow important in all business alike. But ‘the scope and scale of the research depends on the size of the company and on the expected payback from the product’. (Brooke et al., 2003:177) Newly starting entrepreneurs should conduct market analysis to know better about the market and consumers before starting dealing with them; likewise, established businesses need market analysis when introducing a new product or bringing an existing product into a new market. The following steps are basic guidelines for a thorough marketing analysis.

- Determine the targeted market the business or product is to reach, and gather as much information about that market as possible.
- Identify the needs from the target market related to the products or services. List any existing products or services that meet or attempt to meet

such need and note any shortcomings of each product, such as the price, effectiveness or ease of use. Conduct a market research if necessary; the choice of whether a survey collecting primary data or finding secondary data depends on how much insight is needed to take.

- Research other businesses currently offering similar products and service and analyze the competition. Judge whether the competitors are successful in the market, what specific market they are targeting and strategies they use to reach the target market.
- List the methods that could be used to reach the target market. Think of different or improved marketing strategies than the competitors'.
- Identify a unique selling proposition and marketing message which differentiates from the competitors'. (Birn, 2004)

How in-depth the marketing analysis is conducted depends on the nature of the business. (Barclay et al., 2000) It could be assumed that when it is a new product from a food manufacturer who supplies to retailing stores, it is important to do it thoroughly before the official launch, even better with the assist of a test market; as for a restaurant, testing a new product could be relatively easier by simply offering it and observe the customers response to it. This is because of the different amount of required efforts and distribution channels to reach the customers and consumers from the developer. In most cases restaurant product developers approach their consumers directly; opinions and feedback are collected easily without any media and modification of the products could be generated and applied instantly and frequently. (Lynn, 2001)

### **3.5.2 Promotion for Ethnic Food Restaurant**

Ethnic foods, as what we are bringing with our business, comprise a very large part of the specialty food business. The unique cultural backgrounds entitle the food with exotic genesis, traditions and flavours which could be the essence for very interesting marketing tools. The following concludes some marketing tips tailored for ethnic food business. (Mellgren, 2003)

1) Recreate the exotic

Visually keeping the authentic characters of the food and its origin effectively draws attentions. The food premises could be arranged as indigenous as possible, with all the visible utensils and objects in the ethnic style. Maps, books, hand-written cards and other displays that introduce about the food and the culture help people get to know about the exotic product and increase their interests.

2) Reaching out to the community

‘Often the best customers for all sorts of ethnic foods are the people who belong to an ethnic group themselves.’ It could be tried to first contact various cultural groups and promote strongly to them, e.g. with discount coupons. It might turn out that this is the food they love and perhaps have been seeking. If so, they would easily become the free-salesperson for the business, spreading positive word of mouth and bringing more customers.

3) Exotic events

Many special holidays from the origin throughout the year can help promote ethnic foods. Whether or not the holiday is celebrated in the market destination, arranging some traditional events with promotional incentives, to introduce more about the culture, to rise and fulfil people’s curiosity, and to create motives to purchase, is another exciting and working promotional tool.

4) Dish of the week

The restaurant can also offer one dish each week highlighted in various ways, e.g. price and display. The dish could correspond with the holiday, special events going on at the time or with the seasons and use the seasonal ingredients. (Mellgren, 2003)

### 3.5.3 Success and Failure

In most cases, the success or failure of a new products lies ‘on elements outside research and development. These elements are all in the realm of marketing’. (Fuller, 2004:234) Most researchers believe that the failure mainly results from

mis-conducted or misunderstood marketing analysis and unhelpful marketing strategy. These may include wrong strategic direction, product not deliver promises, wrong positioning, etc. The following are some tips that bring a restaurateur closer to a successful marketing of the restaurant.

Marketing is the process of communicating with your existing and prospective customers. A key component of successful restaurant marketing is making sure that your message is consistent with what you really are. Every marketing material— menus, signs, table tents, ads, etc.—should be sending an accurate message about who you are and what you do. (Birn, 2004)

Research conducted by the National Restaurant Association reveals that word-of-mouth is still the best method of advertising. (Entrepreneur, 2009) More than four out of five consumers are likely to choose a new restaurant they based on a recommendation from a family member or friend. So making the foundation of your marketing program an absolutely dazzling dining experience that customers will want to talk about and repeat knocks on the door to a most efficient and low cost marketing method. By asking new customers how they found out about you, you can assess your marketing efforts and find out how to modify them.

Keeping up with the market trends is a general marketing advice. For a restaurant it is possible and favourable to approach not only the food trends, but also various other trends, e.g. printing your menus on recycled paper with some indication to let your customers feel that you care about the environment as much as they do. (Lynn, 2001)

There are also many effective marketing tools to open up marketing opportunities and build up public relations. For instance different types of coupons and gift tickets are always attractive to customers and low-cost compared with the profit it brings up. Also some creative promotional games would for sure leave a deep impression to the customers and lead their topic of discussion with family and friends, e.g. a dice-rolling game to allow the participants win discounts or even a free meal depending on the number they get on the dice. (Lynn, 2001)

## **4. DRAWING UP A BUSINESS PLAN**

This chapter presents the comprehensive understanding of what a business plan is, how important it is to an enterprise and the theoretical guidelines of drawing a professional business plan in general.

### **4.1 A business plan in a nutshell**

A business plan is a formal document written according to certain format and content required to show the company's current status as well as the potentials of future development. Drawing up a business plan is perhaps the most important step in launching any new venture or expanding an existing one. (Dou, 2010)

The aim of a business plan is normally to obtain business partners or investors with reliable and convincing presentation of the value of the business. It should include both short and long term goals for the enterprise, a description of the product or service to be offered and the market opportunities anticipated for them, and at last an explanation of the resources and means to be employed to achieve the goals facing the existing competition. (Barrow et al. 2001)

It takes its own amount of time and effort to prepare a comprehensive business plan along these lines depending on the nature of the business and how much information been already gathered. According to Barrow, Paul Barrow, Robert Brown in 2010, anything between 200 to 400 man hours could be consumed. The length and amount of information contained in a business plan depends on the scale of the company's business. A good business plan shows the competitiveness with realistic analysis of the products/services and their markets, a thorough strategic plan, an efficient organization, a promising financial plan, etc. Therefore, a business plan ought to be written with a complete content, a clear structure, a realistic ambition and a comprehensive language. (Dou, 2010)

## 4.2 Purposes of preparing a business plan

A completed business serves the entrepreneurs as a blueprint like a map guiding the users to their destinations. Besides, there are numbers of other important benefits that can be obtained from preparing a business plan. First of all, the systematic analysis conducted when planning helps you avoid making mistakes in the marketplace, because if you do it would be on paper first, and thus it is easy to recognize the correct way of doing in real operation. For instance, a new entrepreneur who was collecting data for his business plan found out that a local competitor whom he thought was a one-man band turned out to be the pilot operation for a proposed national chain of franchised outlets. Thus he got to be able to draw up an appropriate and effective market entry strategy before it's too late. (Barrow et al., 2001)

Also, a completed business plan helps the entrepreneurs feel more confident about their abilities to start and operate the business. 'It may even compensate for lack of capital and experience, provided of course that you have other factors in your favor, such as a sound idea and a sizeable market opportunity for your product or service.' (Barrow et al., 2001:7)

Furthermore, the business plan shows how much money is needed, for what it is needed and when, and for how long it is required. The two most important reasons why some new business activities have failed are under-capitalization and early cash-flow problems. And, of course, with a well prepared business plan where the financial calculations are thoroughly done, these risks of failure can be significantly reduced. Some basic and necessary calculations commonly conducted when drawing up a business plan include:

- The sales forecast: a prediction based on an analysis of expected market conditions, best done on a monthly basis for a year.
- Balance sheet: a method of periodically measuring of the growth and development of the venture, usually on a yearly basis.

- Profit-and-lost statement: an accumulative record of how well the business is doing in terms of sales, costs, and profitability, usually prepared on a monthly basis but covering an accounting period of one year.
- Cash-flow statement
- Break-even analysis: with the calculation produced from above financial statements, it shows the level of sales needed to generate sufficient gross profit to cover the overheads of the business to break even.

A range of alternative viable strategies can also be experimented in this way and entrepreneurs can so concentrate on options that make the most economic use of limited financial resources. (Dou, 2010)

Last but not least, preparing a business plan provides the entrepreneur an insight into the planning process. 'It is this process that is important to the long-term health of a business, and not simply the plan that comes out of it.' (Barrow et al., 2001:7) Businesses are dynamic as well as the commercial and competitive environments they are operated in. No one predicts every event to happen as recorded in the business plan; but through the process of business planning they create understanding and knowledge which helps prepare the business for any changes that it may face, and so enable it to adjust quickly. (Dou, 2010)

It cannot be said that a business plan is the passport to sources of finance. But it is the means by which you display your entrepreneur potential and managerial talent to the full and communicate your ideas to others in a professional and convincing format. These outside parties who need to understand and appreciate the ideas and the reasoning behind them could be bankers, potential investors, partners or advisory agencies. Once they know what you are trying to do they will be better able to offer help. (Barrow et al., 2001)

It is risky to start the business without a business plan. Mostly it happens to small businesses that either appears to need little or no capital, or whose founders have funds of their own. Usually such founders tend to think that the time spent on preparing a business plan would be more usefully spent looking for premises, buying

a new car, or installing a computer. Anything that stands in the way of immediate action is viewed time-wasting. This would highly possibly lead to mistake found out at a much higher and usually fatal cost in the marketplace, which would have otherwise be discovered cheaply and in advance when preparing a business plan. (Barrow et al., 2001)

### **4.3 Readers of your business plan and what they look for**

The potential readers of a business plan are most likely the core employees, shareholders, selected partners, and present or potential financiers and investors. To whom the different parts of the business plan are presented depends on the level of confidentiality and the position of the reader. If the business plan includes classified strategies or business secrets, you should be selective to the readers. Only when you are sure that one would not leak the information without your permission, can you offer the opportunity to read your business plan. Sometimes a written treaty of secrecy is needed. (Barrow et al., 2001:7)

Researchers from Enterprise Faculty in Cranfield School of Management have concluded in general the requirements that any successful business plan should meet. Instead of being solely confident about a creative idea, the entrepreneur should also be sure about the needs of potential customers to what s/he wants to offer. The business plan should focus more on explaining how and to whom products will be sold rather than occupy majority of its space with product and technical descriptions. It is not enough to just recognize the market orientation, thought, it is important to convince the reader that the entrepreneur knows in what aspects their business can stand out from similar operators and is ready to concentrate on exploiting these opportunities. (Barrow et al., 2001:12)

Some important and targeted readers are probably the potential financiers or investors. If one is looking for outside financiers, the business plan works as a messenger to them. In this case, the business plan should be carrying the information which fulfills what the different financiers would like to know, i.e. more concentrated on financial-related estimation, which could include the projection of capi-

tal, growth, risks, guarantee, period of payback, the profit they will get. Different types of financiers also look for their own needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, it is important for a business planner to understand of the needs of his/her reader and compose the business plan with special emphasizes accordingly. Several common financiers and what they normally look out in a business plan will be listed and explained here. (Barrow et al., 2001:15)

The first type is commercial bank. Commercial banks offer business loans to enterprises which are running smoothly. They are very well aware of risks and normally requires sufficient guarantee from the financed enterprises. The guaranteeing items could be cash account, valuable metals, assets (lands, premises, machineries, etc.), accounts receivable, and products in stock. If one item is taken by the bank as guarantee, it could be required to have twice or more value of the issued loan. The percentage of interests of the loan depends on the macroeconomic situation of the country as well as the risk predicted on the financing project by the bank. (Barrow et al., 2001:15)

Bankers and all sources of debt capitals look firstly for asset security to back their loan and the assurance to get their money back. Also, an interest rate from the loan will be charged according to the current market condition and their view of the risk level of the proposal. For the bankers hope is the success of the business so that they can lend more money in the future and provide more banking services such as insurance, tax advice, etc to a loyal customer. Therefore, this type of financiers is more interested in a mild and steady growth of the business rather than a rapid one. (Dou, 2010)

The second type is a venture capital firm. The aim of this type of funds is profit. They conduct thorough analysis on the business plan to make sure that sizable reward will be brought by within certain risks. This type of fund is less demanding compared to the commercial bank in the sense that they do not require the guarantee. But on the other hand, they take back a considerable part of the busi-

ness profit and put a non-executive director on the board of the company to look after their interests. (Barrow et al., 2001:16)

Some private investor could also be a financial source. Private investors are usually wealthy and independent individuals who seek for opportunities to invest money to a promisingly operating company. They expect higher reward than from investment securities and funds. They normally fund the money to newly launched or expanded projects, and/or distribute to different enterprises in order to lower the overall risk. (Dou, 2010)

These venture capital sources are seeking for winners from new and fast/growing businesses. As the risk involved in investing in new and young ventures are greater than in established companies, venture capital funders have to find the chance of larger overall returns. Ventures with projection of high capital growth, e.g. with annual compound growth rates above 50 per cent, are the winners that they look for. Apart from this, Venture capitalists are also looking for a substantial shareholding in the business. They might want to put a non-executive director on the board of the company to look after their interests. (Dou, 2010)

If some friends and relatives are your targeted financiers, their needs must also be taken into account in the business plan. Their funds can be in the form of debt equity, but they might also seek some management role for themselves. In this case, common senses and knowledge about the funder in question should help with the decision how to accommodate them. (Barrow et al., 2001:16)

Another type of funder is development fund, mostly operated by governmental organizations, aiming on social and macroeconomic development. They are willing to carry with greater risks. They finance on the enterprise only until it becomes self-sufficient when they will exit. Enterprises that bring about social and environmental contributions (such as more employment opportunities, high added value, high technical content, environmental friendly, etc.) are especially valued by them. Therefore, if the business plan is aimed for such funding organizations, it would be beneficial to include sufficient information on the aspects mentioned

above. But, of course, they seek in the first place the evidence of the companies' capability to survive and profit from the business plan just like all other financing sources do. (Dou, 2010)

Depending on the nature and characters of the enterprise, it is possible to acquire voluntary assistance from governmental funds. Even though it does not require any pay back, an assessment on the business plan is still essential before the decision because they expect the funded projects to be well planned and viable, and will bring rewarding economic and social benefit. (Barrow et al., 2001:7)

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

It is said that 'one major venture capital firm alone receives several thousand business plans a year. Only 500 or so are examined in any detail, less than 25 are pursued to the negotiating stage, and only 6 of those are invested in.' (Barrow et al., 2001: 11) The quality of the business plan affects the reader's decision whether to proceed beyond an initial reading of the plan to a great extent.

So, to be successful the business plan must be targeted on the needs of the financiers, and especially at the balance among them. It might be needed to assemble slightly different business plans for one entrepreneur highlighting different areas of concern for different types of investors. (Dou, 2010)

Although financiers expect to see a promising business projection and optimism from the entrepreneur, it is not wise to forecast something like 'the sky is the limit for the growth, and money is the only thing that stands between them and their success.' (Barrow et al., 2001: 11) Financiers are dealing with enough amounts of investment proposals to provide them a clear picture of realistic financial results and marketing approaches in any sector. In this case, a believable forecast of business growth backed up with hard facts where possible is an important factor to impress the financiers. If the forecast does not look so impressive in itself from the reality, then send it to lending bankers, who appreciate modest forecasts, instead of venture capitalists.

After collecting all the information and data about the opportunities and threats, i.e. the market situation, the consumers' needs and behavior, the competitors, the governmental policies, etc., assembling with own ideas and projection, the draft of the business plan should then be edited, where the grammar, spelling and language are carefully checked to make sure that it is a 'crisp, correct, clear and complete' (Barrow et al., 2001:315) business plan which is not too long. No matter how complex and sizeable a venture is, outsiders would not have time and patience to read a too long business plan for it. Therefore, the writer of the business plan should display his/her ideas and data to the full extent with minimum words. Normally volumes of data, tables and graphs are referred to in the text but displayed in an appendix.

## **5. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD**

### **5.1 Data collection method**

The data for this study were collected in two ways. In the theoretical part, secondary data were gathered from different resources including books, published essays and websites. The empirical data were collected through a primary research in the means of survey with a 4-page questionnaire.

Because this is the survey that helps us collect the information based on which we not only decide how to import our new products, but also develop a complete strategy for running a restaurant in this market. Therefore, in the questionnaire there are questions about people's opinions on both general restaurant experience and sushi and Japanese food.

It consists of 16 questions and is divided into three parts. In the first part the respondents provided some background information about themselves. In the second part we ask about people's general habits concerning dining in restaurants, including their frequency of eating out, preferences on types of restaurants and food, prices they perceive as reasonable, what they value for a meal in a restaurant on the menu, taste, service, atmosphere, price, healthiness, location, and interior decoration, etc. In the last part we collect people's experiences, opinions and expectations towards sushi and Japanese foods. The questionnaire was translated into both Finnish and Swedish. Together with each questionnaire we enclosed a coupon for 20% discount on a meal in our restaurant as an incentive.

### **5.2 Sampling**

The sampling method we finally used was stratified sampling, which was a compromise of our primary plan of simple random sampling. At first, we intended to approach to the shoppers in big stores such as City Market and Anttila, where it would be more likely to get respondents with various backgrounds. But as we tried to contact the managers in the stores, we found it to be a bad idea because

mostly the shoppers do not pay attention to any questionnaires left in the store if there is not any supervision, i.e. someone to stop and instruct them to do it, or any visible and attractive incentive.

Then we came up with the idea that we could interview, instead of the customers, the staff of different shops and organizations. As long as we could get access to as many organizations as possible, the background of the respondents would also be various. So, with some effort, in the end we managed to leave our questionnaires to the staff coffee room of our school teachers, Anttila, H&M, VASEK and the city orchestra.

However, this method did not work out as well as we imagined. In total 83 copies of questionnaires were sent out to the coffee rooms and the respondents were given two weeks to fill them in. We only got a responding rate of around 25%. Moreover, we did not manage to get back the questionnaires left to Anttila because they were thrown away by some unwitting employee because of an inspection they had during the same time. Therefore, in the end we decided to send the questionnaire via email to the students of our school, which ensures the amount of respondents we got.

This experience could be a lesson to us as well as later students and researchers that in order to reach the target respondents, it is vital to find a secure way to approach them and an effective program to arouse their attention and motivation to fill in the questionnaires. From the fact that all the managers of the shops that agreed to help leaving the questionnaires in their premises without hesitation, it could be assumed that people would certainly be willing to fill in the questionnaire if we ask them face-to-face. This could be an advisable method for doing survey with printed questionnaires.

### **5.3 Reliability and validity**

Reliability means how consistent and repeatable a measuring device is. If the same measurement always produces the same results when used in similar cir-

cumstances, it is a reliable measurement. Validity refers to whether a study measures or examines what it claims to measure or examine. Therefore, in a social research like the one we are doing, reliability concerns the quality of the questionnaire while validity concerns the quality of the answers we gather. (Trochim, 2006)

Before designing the questionnaire, we first defined what we wanted to find out. The results of the research are to help developing a business plan for a Japanese restaurant in Vaasa. Therefore, we need to study our potential customers to find out how to promote our restaurant and attract them. Firstly, we should understand thoroughly about their habits dining of dining out, e.g. how often they eat out, how much they are willing to pay, what they value and expect from a restaurant meal experience, etc. Moreover, as we are bringing our new products, sushi and Japanese food into this market, we certainly have to study the foundation of this product in this market, i.e. how much people know and have tried, what they think about it based on their experiences as well as how they would expect to receive this new type of food into their diets. Therefore, our questionnaire consisted of these two separate parts of people's general dining habits in restaurants and Japanese food in Vaasa, in each part we included as much as we could think of to assist in developing our business. The questionnaire was modified and pilot tests were done several times before it was officially given out to ensure the comprehensibility.

The validity in our study concerns the sampling and how well they give answers to our questions. We did our best to motivate our respondents and make it easy for them to do it in every way to ensure the quality of the answers they provide. We gave out a coupon of 20% discount on a meal in our restaurant together with each questionnaire as an incentive to motivate people. When designing the questions, we believe that qualitative research gives more valid results than quantitative research, but too many open questions decrease respondents' willingness to answer. Therefore, we designed our open questions in a 'closed way', using many options of descriptive words with an option of 'other, specify' for each question. The respondents had the freedom to choose as many as they consider suitable and to

choose whether to specify more or not. The questionnaire was translated to the respondents' mother tongues to increase their convenience and motivation. Finally, the questionnaires were sent out randomly to different groups of people to ensure the anonymity.

However, the sampling procedure left us some question about the validity. As mentioned above, we met several troubles in trying to get access to our targeted respondents and in the end we had to ensure the amount of answers by approaching the students. As our restaurant targets people with diverse background, our sample should be ideally covering as many professions as possible. But the number of student respondents amounted up to half of the total number which might decrease the accuracy to the target, i.e. the validity, of our research.

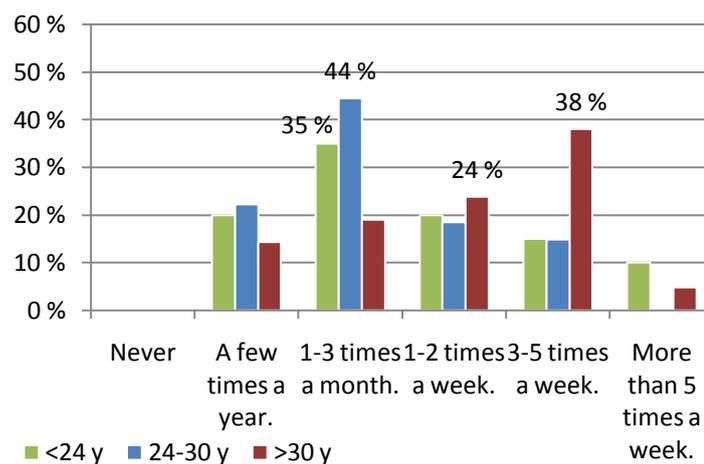
## 6. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data was done with Excel. Some of the information is analyzed in 3 different groups based on the respondents' age. We classed 3 age groups which are <24-year-old, 24—30-year-old and >30-year-old, considering that before 24-year-old, most people are in school and they share similar spending and dining habits; after 24-year-old they leave school and start working life, and the habits change with the life change; after 30-year-old, they mature more and all habits most likely reshape again. Only the information which we consider to be age-sensitive is analyzed under the age groups.

The total number of questionnaires analyzed is 70. There are 20 respondents in <24y group, 27 in 24-30y group and 23 in >30y group. Due to the inequality of the numbers, the data is compared in percentages.

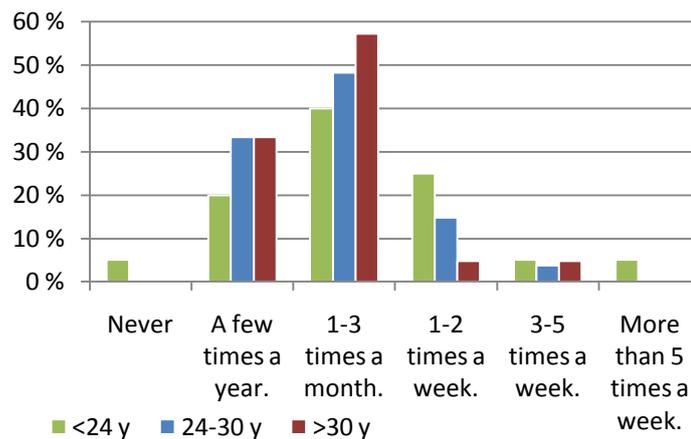
### 6.1 Dining habits

The first question about people's general dining habits is of the frequency of them having meals in restaurant, lunch and dinner studied separately. It is analyzed under the age group division. The results are shown in Figure 3 and 4 below.



**Figure 3** How often eating out for lunch

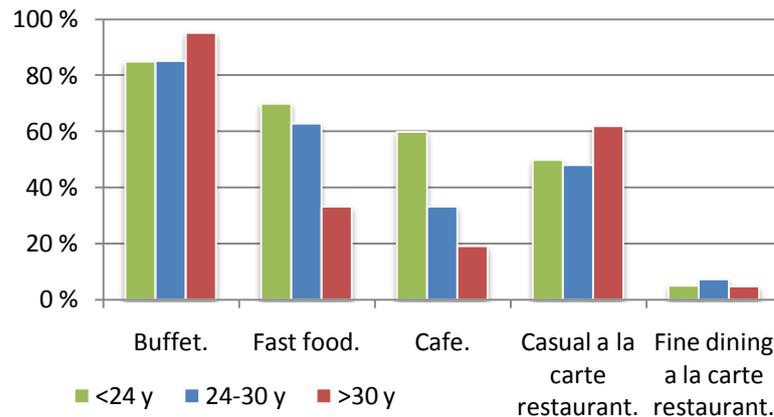
From Figure 3 it could be seen that, the two younger groups, of <24y and 24-30y respondents, share the same pattern and they have lunch in a restaurant mostly 1-3 times a month, majority of the rest are going either a few times a year or 1-2 times a week, a *minority* are eating out more frequently than 1-2 times per week. However, the older group has lunch in restaurants obviously more often, with over 60% of them eating out for lunch on a weekly base and 35% for 1-5 times a week.



**Figure 4** How often eating out for dinner

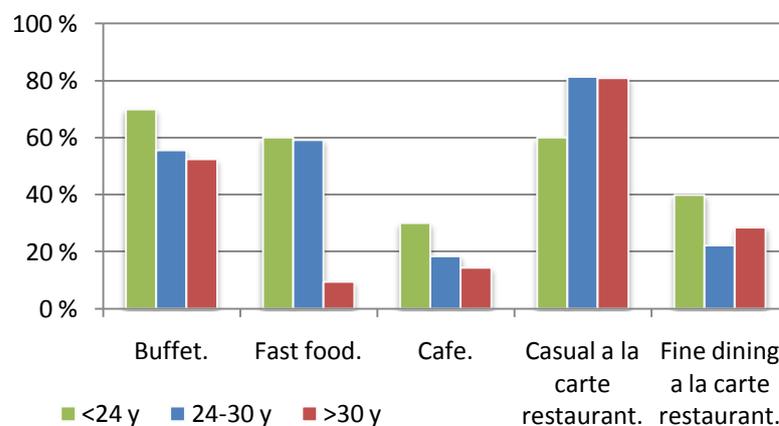
When it comes to dinner, all 3 groups have similar patterns. The majority eats out 1-3 times a month. Some young people less than 24y would have dinner out more often, up to 1-2 weeks a month; and the elders go fewer times a year.

The second question concerns the types of restaurant most chosen by people for eating out. Each respondent can choose up to 3 types of restaurants. The information is also gathered separately for lunch and dinner, and analyzed in different age groups.



**Figure 5** Most visited restaurants for lunch

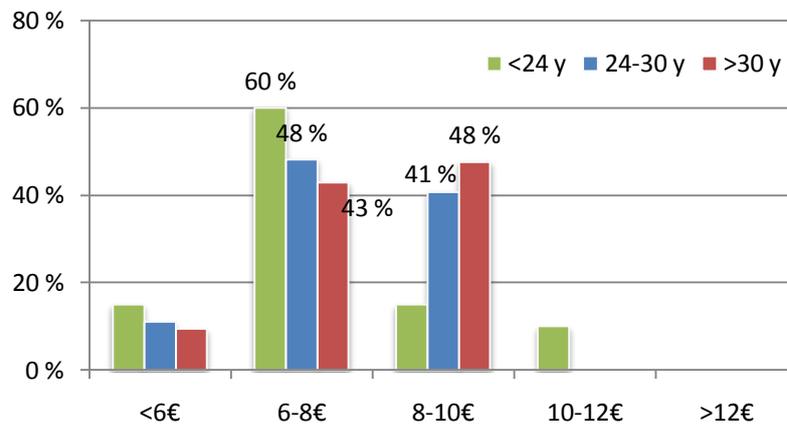
As shown in Figure 5, for lunch all three groups agree mostly that buffet is the best type of restaurant to go. After it people over 30y would go for casual a la carte restaurant while fast food is still popular among the younger diners.



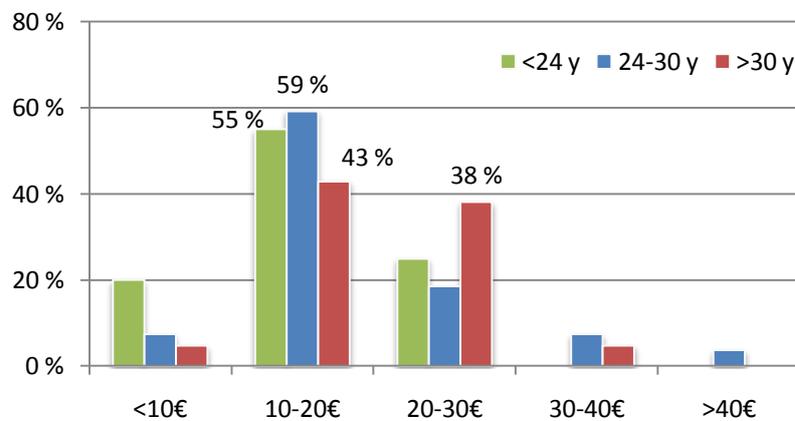
**Figure 6** Most visited restaurants for dinner

Most of the respondents older than 24y would have their dinner in casual a la carte restaurant, seen in Figure 6. Secondly the >30-year-olds would go for buffet while the 24-30y for fast food. The youngest are still more willing to have a buffet dinner, while fast food and casual a la carte restaurants come equally as the second choice for them.

The most suitable prices perceived for lunch and dinner for one person is asked for in the next question, which is also considered to be age sensitive during the analysis, shown in Figure 7 and 8.



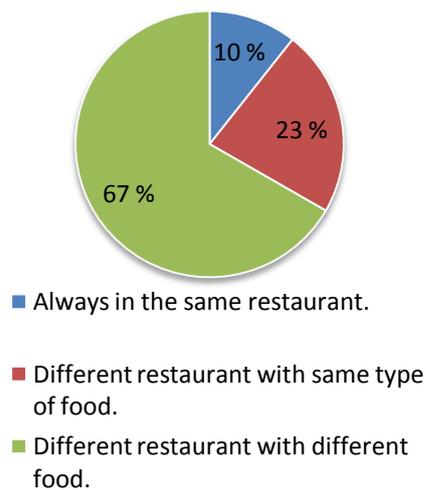
**Figure 7** Ideal price for lunch/person



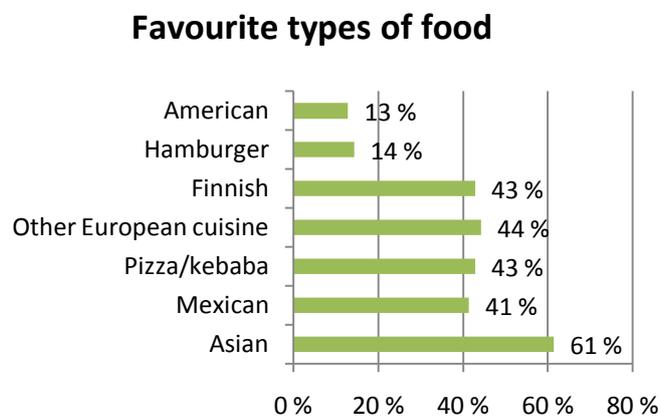
**Figure 8** Ideal price for dinner/person

The characters of spending power in each age group are reflected here by the answers we collected. Up to 60% of the <24y think that 6-8€ is the most suitable price for a lunch. 48% of the 24-30y also agree but 41% of them also accept a lunch for 8-10€. Almost half of the over 30y would like to pay 8-10€ for their lunches, while 43% also prefer 6-8€.

For dinner, over half of the two younger groups think 10-20€ is the most reasonable price for one person, around 20% of them also accept 20-30€. Around 40% of the elders can afford 20-30€ for a dinner/person and slightly more of them would pay 10-20€.



**Figure 9** Preferences on variation



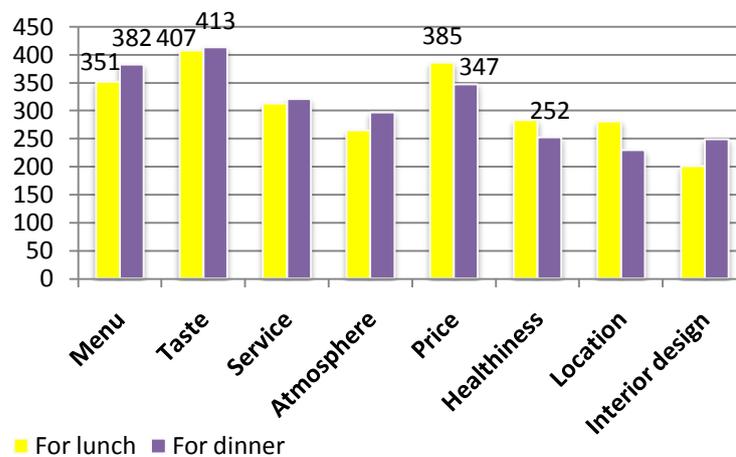
**Figure 10** Favorite types of food

Figure 9 shows respondents' preferences on variation of the restaurants and foods. Lunch and dinner is not asked separately here and the data is not perceived as age sensitive. The majority of people prefer variation on their dining experiences. 67% of the respondents go to different restaurants for different types of food; 23%

change among different restaurants which offer same type of food while only 10% visit always in the same restaurant.

The most loved foods by the people are analyzed next and shown in Figure 10. Asian cuisine comes to the top with significant advantage. Other European cuisine comes to the second, slightly more popular than local Finnish cuisine and pizza/kebab, followed closely by Mexican food. Both American food and hamburger have only quite few lovers.

Next, our respondents are required to rank 8 elements of a meal experience according to their values to them. The ranking is also considered as general information for analysis without the age group division. When analyzing, the rankings are seen as the points given to each element and summed up, with 8 meaning the most important and 1 the least. Total points of each element are shown in Figure 11 below.

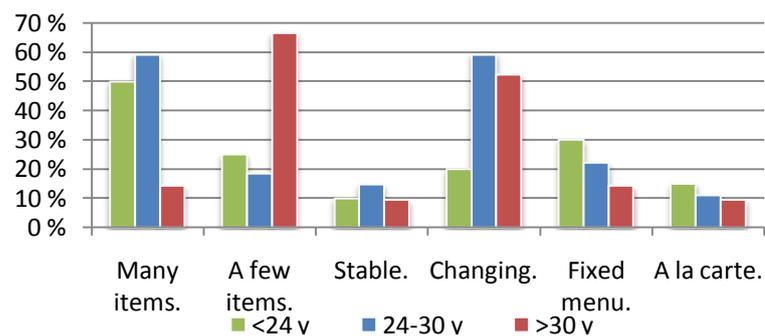


**Figure 11** Menu values

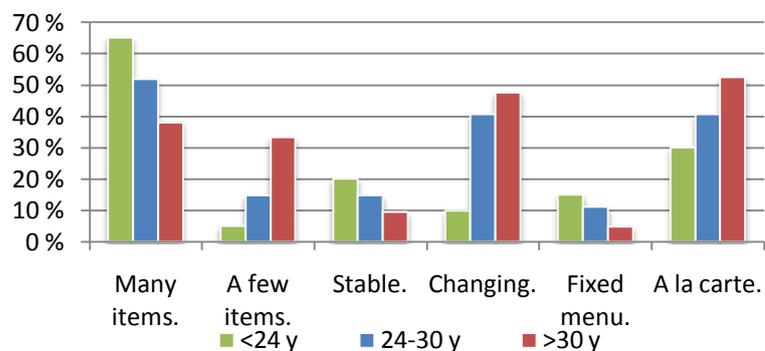
The result shows that Finnish people are much more material quality-oriented than spiritual quality-oriented when dining out. For both lunch and dinner, the three most valued elements are taste, menu and price. Taste is the top element for both meals. Price is valued more at lunch over the menu; but for dinner the quality of menu is considered slightly more than money. The interior design is least im-

portant for lunch and second least for dinner, followed by the location. Healthiness, which is an important element in our study for being an advantageous character of our product, comes to the 4<sup>th</sup> place for lunch after service and the 5<sup>th</sup> place for dinner after service and atmosphere.

Although not equally valued by the customers, all the elements are important for us to study in order to develop a comprehensive strategy to optimize the customers' satisfaction in our restaurant. Therefore, we designed one question for each of the elements in our questionnaire. Several descriptive words were given for each element and the respondents can choose as many as they consider being suitable. Most of the elements are analyzed without the age group division, only between lunch and dinner, because they are considered rather individual and not age-sensitive.

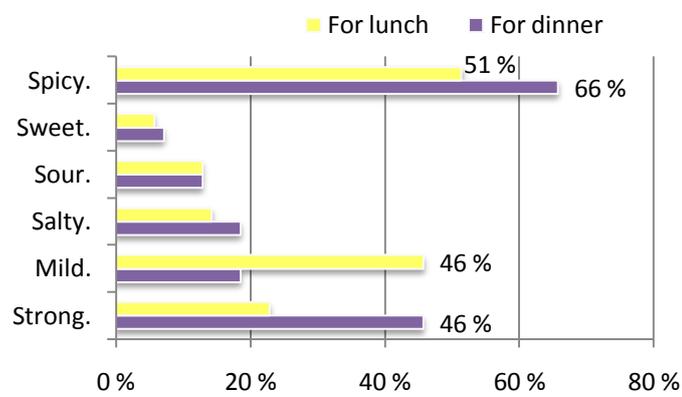


**Figure 12** Menu for lunch

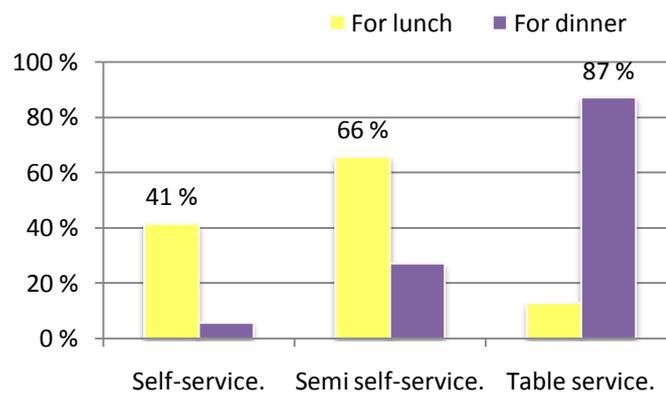


**Figure 13** Menu for dinner

From Figure 12 and 13 we can see that for the lunch menu there is certain variation in what is valued by different groups, while for dinner menu the patterns are quite similar. For lunch the youngest group mostly just requires various options in the menu. The middle group wants menus with many items that change. The eldest also want the menu to change but with only a few items. For dinner, an à la carte menu with many items that changes would please most people from the two elder groups, while the young group simply requires highly various items to choose from an à la carte menu.



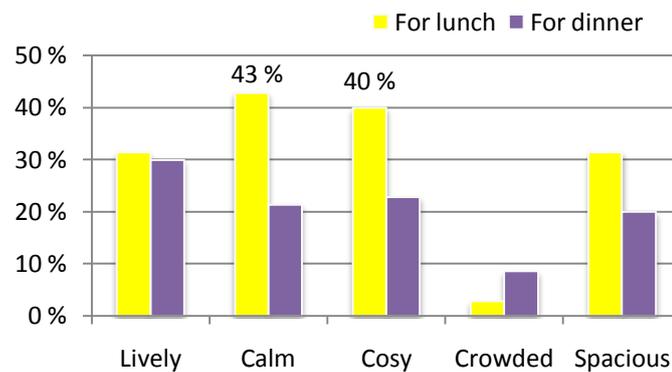
**Figure 14 Taste**



**Figure 15 Service**

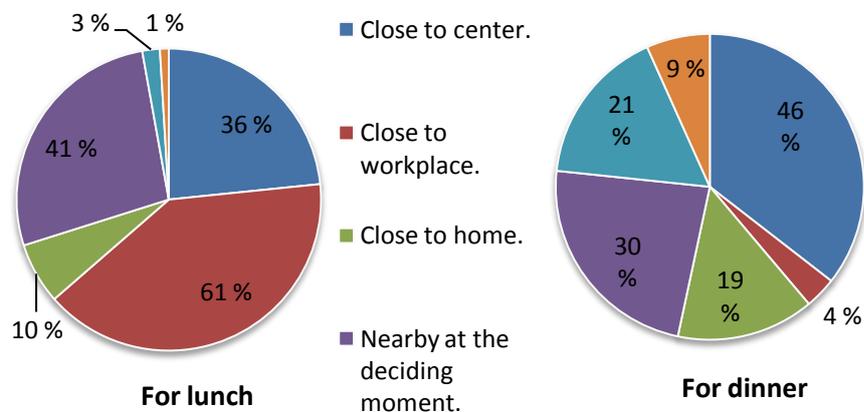
The results of taste and service are analyzed in Figure 14 and 15. Obviously most of our respondents have quite a spicy taste, 51% have chosen spicy for lunch and

66% for dinner. Lunch is generally preferred to be milder and dinner to be stronger in taste. For lunch people generally prefer more flexible and efficient self-service or semi self-service, while for dinner the more relaxing table service pleases 86% of the respondents.



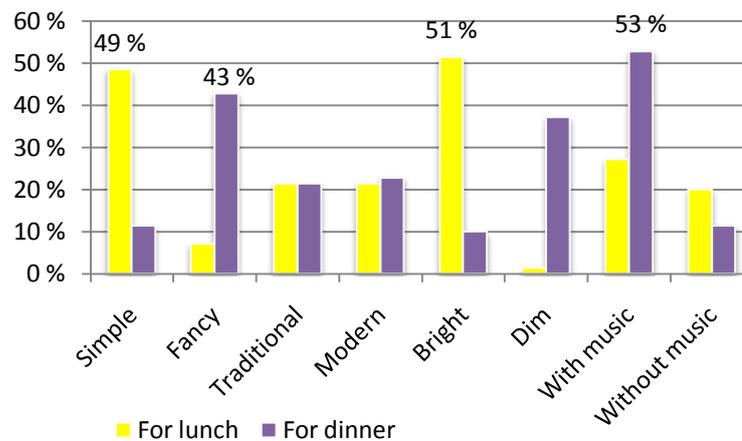
**Figure 16** Atmosphere

From Figure 16 we can see that people generally have stronger preference toward a quiet lunch, which is wanted to be calm and cozy; a crowded place is obviously not popular. While for dinner there is no obvious preference among these characters, which probably means that it depends much on individual preferences. Associating this fact with the previous results it could be assumed that for lunch, efficiency of the meal is pursued than anything else.



**Figure 17** Location

Figure 17 illustrates respondents' preferences on location for lunch and dinner. Again there is a strong requirement for the location to be close to workplace at lunch or nearby at the deciding moment to ensure efficiency. Being close to the centre is also well chosen probably because workplaces are around centre in many cases. For dinner, somewhere popular around the centre or close by and easy to get are most preferred locations.



**Figure 18** Interior decoration

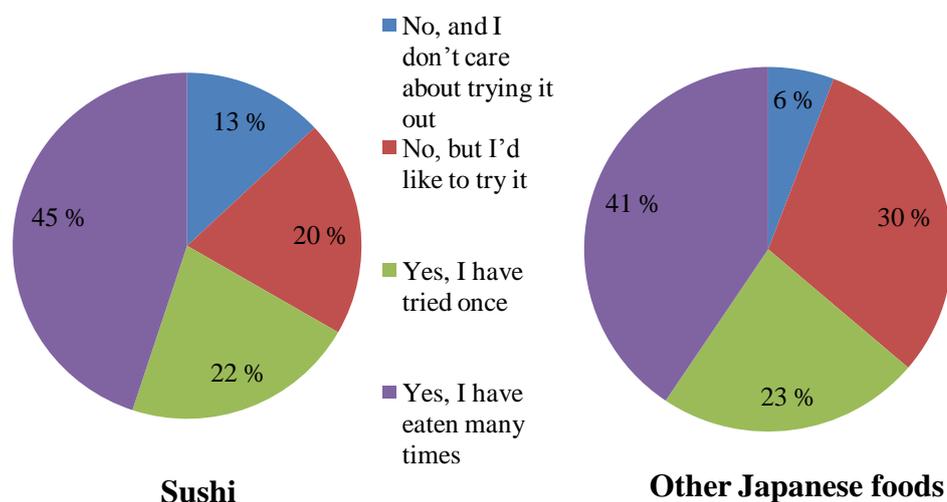
The result of interior decoration in Figure 18 again shows the difference between what is pursued at lunch and at dinner. Almost half of the respondents chose both being simple and bright for lunch, which is again to ensure the efficiency for the meal. And for dinner, diners are much more atmosphere-oriented, looking for the fancy style with music playing; and for the lighting dim is much chosen over bright. Some respondents also gave their own opinions in the specifying area, including being unique, fitting with the theme, and with music that emphasizes the theme.

The question concerning the healthiness of the meals is an open question where the respondents write down their own opinion about how a healthy lunch/dinner is like. Most of the people have similar opinions. Some key words are salad/vegetables, fish, low-carb, low-fat, diverse, etc. Generally speaking, to the ma-

majority of our respondents a healthy meal is a light meal with various nutrition, low in carbohydrate, fat and salt and able to keep people full for a long time. This is exactly what a *sushi* and Japanese meal brings to you. The various fillings with vegetables and/or fish ensure the nutrition, and it is absolutely light and low fat. With a base of rice, though containing quite high carbohydrate, it makes you full without eating a large amount and keeps for a long time. Japanese food is also well known for simple, low fat and nutritious.

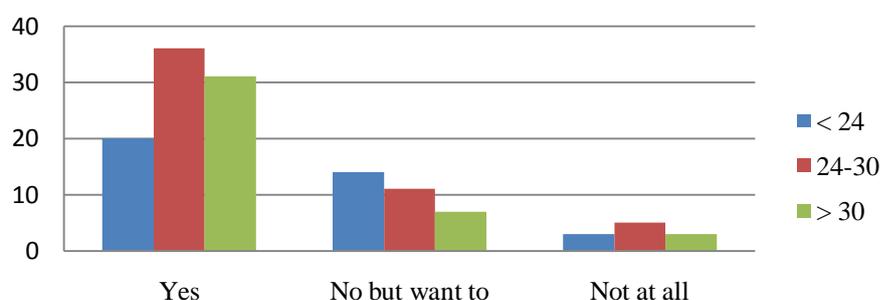
## 6.2 Japanese Cuisine in Vaasa

As shown in Figure 19, most of respondents have tried *sushi* (67%) and/or other Japanese foods (64%) before. About 2/3 of them claimed that they have eaten the foods many times. However, 13% and 6% of respondents, accordingly, do not want to try *sushi* and/or Japanese foods at all. In general, these numbers give a positive picture of Vaasa as a niche market for a new Japanese restaurant. While there are many people who got to know the foods, or even love them, and some willing to try, the supplying capacity of Japanese foods in Vaasa is still quite small.



**Figure 19** Have you ever tried Japanese foods before?

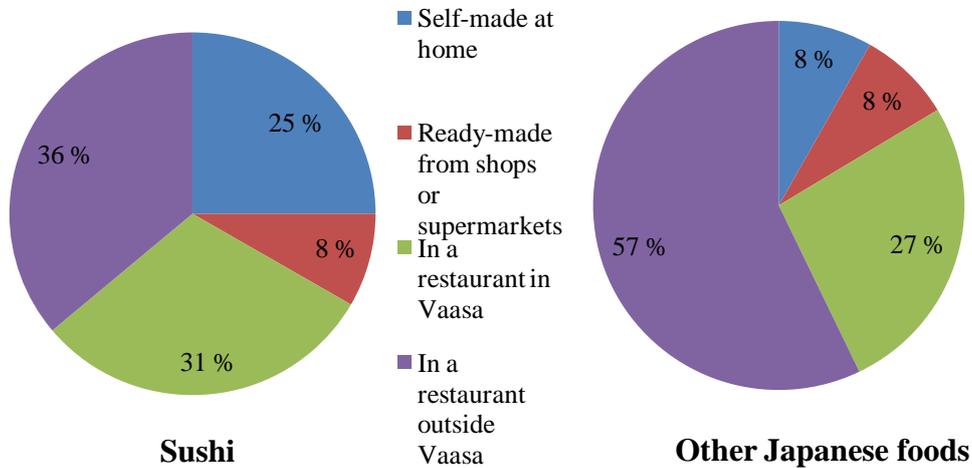
Looking closer to the age groups, as shown in Figure 20, the majority of respondents (about 41%) who have tried the foods fall into the age of 24-30 years old. Surprisingly, this is also the group that has the most choices (about 45%) in ‘No, and I don’t care trying it’. In contrast, the group of people less than 24 years old has the least answers (about 23%) in ‘Yes, I have tried it once’ and ‘Yes, I have eaten many times’. However, it has the highest responses (about 44%) in ‘No, but I want to try’. One of the reasons to explain for this situation is that Japanese foods generally are quite expensive. Therefore, it might be more affordable for people who have a stable job, which is the group of 24 years old or up in this case. On the other hands, for the younger group, the price for a Japanese meal can be quite high, but as they are young, they have the will to try new things.



**Figure 20** Have you ever tried Japanese foods before? (by age group)

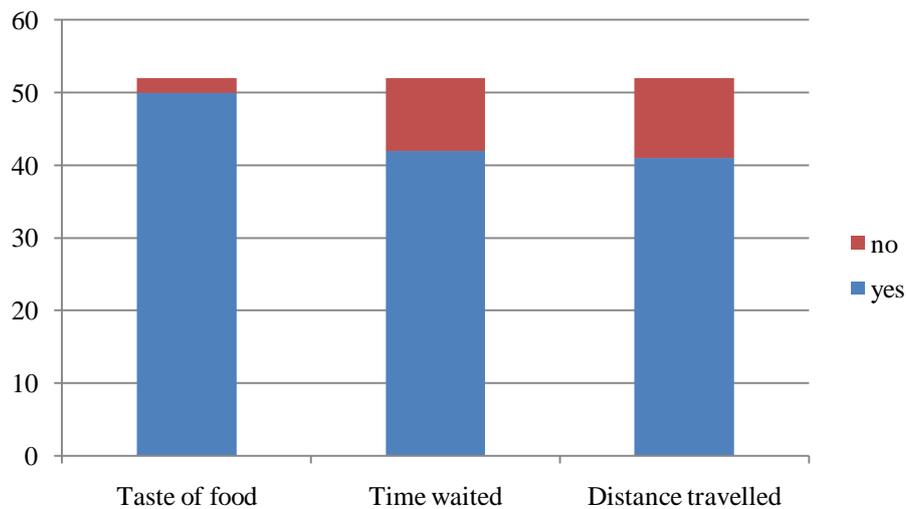
According to the result in Figure 21, most of the respondents have had their *sushi* and/or other Japanese foods in restaurants outside Vaasa, with the response rate of, accordingly, 36% and 53%. This partly reflects the lack of Japanese restaurants in Vaasa at the moment. On the other side, only 8% of respondents buy the ready-made foods from shops or supermarkets. Another noticeable point is that, while 25% of answerers have made *sushi* at home, only 8% of them have made other Japanese foods themselves. The numbers explain the high interest of Vaasa people towards *sushi*. However, other Japanese dishes are still not so familiar with the local people. Another reason might be the availability of ingredients. As mentioned in Section 2.8, while *sushi* products can be easily found in Vaasa, other

Japanese food products are quite rare and many people still do not know how to use them.

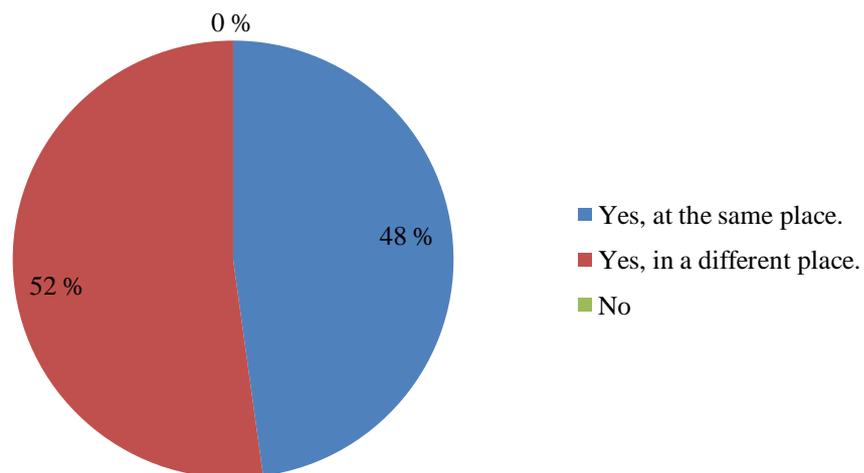


**Figure 21** Where have you tried Japanese foods?

Two questions about customer satisfaction are also given in the questionnaire. In general, positive responses are very high (Figure 22 and Figure 23). About 96% of respondents are happy with the taste of foods, 81% think the time waited is reasonable and 75% are satisfied with the distance they have travelled to have the meals. Among three criteria given, most dissatisfaction falls into travelling distance, which covers 25% of the responses; whereas taste of foods has the lowest rate of dissatisfaction (4%). Afterwards, people are asked whether they want to have the same experience again. None of respondents said 'No' and 53% of them would like to experience in other places. As shown in Figure 17, most of people answers that they have tried Japanese foods elsewhere outside Vaasa, while their place of residence is in Vaasa. This leads to the inconvenience when they have to travel a long way just to have the foods. Moreover, in spite of the good experience with a certain restaurant, diners might not come back again due to the fact that the location is not in their home domicile. Rather than that, they may choose another restaurant in another city when they are on a business trip or leisure vacation. In addition, since Japanese cuisine is still quite new to many people, diners would like to experiment in different places until they find their most favorite one.

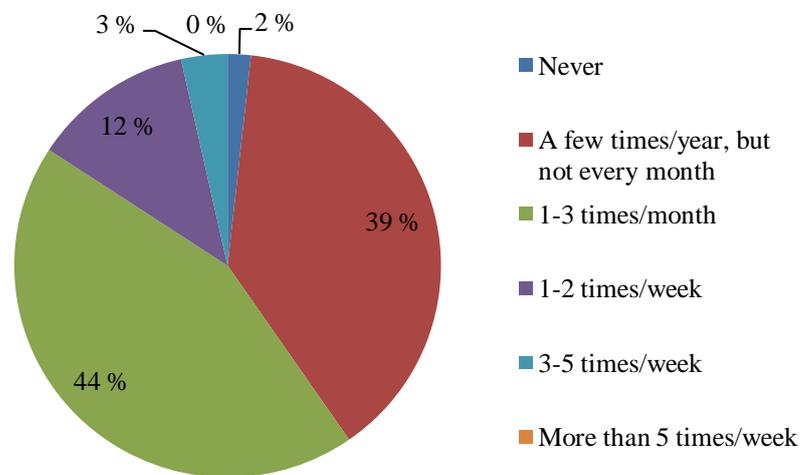


**Figure 22** Customer satisfaction



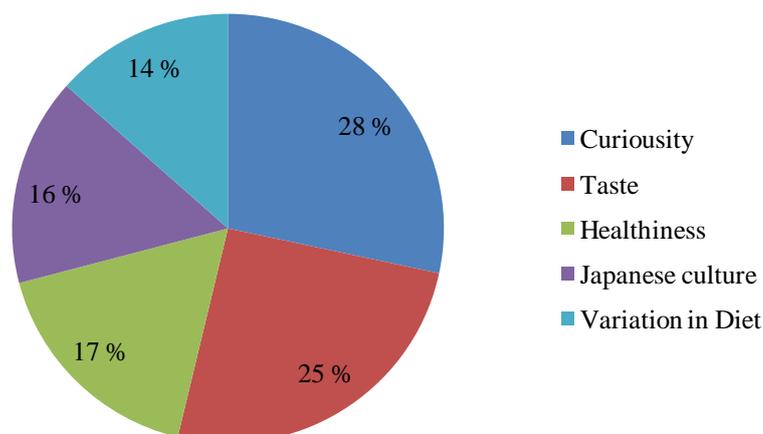
**Figure 23** Would you like to have the same experience again?

The result in Figure 24 shows that respondents do not want to have Japanese foods too often or too rarely. Most of the choices falls into ‘ 1-3 times/month’ and ‘1-2 times/week’, with the according rate of 44% and 39%. It should be noticed that most of people have chosen to eat Japanese foods by going to a restaurant. And the results here are quite comparable with the general dining out habit of people in Vaasa, which is illustrated in Figure 3 and Figure 4.



**Figure 24** How often would you like to include Japanese cuisine in your diet?

In addition, the main reasons people would like to eat Japanese foods are because of their taste and people's curiosity. As being illustrated in Figure 25, 'curiosity' has the highest rate of response, which covers 28% of the answers. 'Taste' has a slightly lower rate of response, chosen by 25% of answerers. 'Taste' has a slightly lower rate of response, chosen by 25% of answerers. In contrast, only 14% of respondents choose Japanese cuisine for the variation in their diet.



**Figure 25** Factors affecting people's interest in Japanese Cuisine.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we will discuss the findings of our research and how it would benefit us as well as readers. In addition, some suggestions for further study and research will be given.

### 7.1 Discussion

The supply of *sushi* has long been rather limited in Vaasa, with retailed frozen boxed *sushi* from supermarkets, free *sushi* offered on special ‘*sushi* evenings’ in some bars and nightclubs, and a shop which collects orders and supplies *sushi* for a limited time of the week. Therefore, we assume that there is a niche of food business in Vaasa. It might need a Japanese restaurant. With this thought, we carried out a study and research to confirm whether this assumption is correct and to learn how to successfully bring this idea into practice.

We studied on people’s dining habits and perceptions of *sushi* and other Japanese foods in Vaasa, and found out that most of them dine out in restaurants rather frequently, with 1-3 times a week or more, and a majority prefers to have variation in both the restaurants and the types of food. In addition, Asian cuisine has already gained its winning place among different types of foods in Vaasa. Among those respondents who have had experiences with *sushi* and other Japanese foods, the majority would like to have such foods again and include them into their diets. This, together with the fact that there is a lack of place where *sushi* and Japanese foods are offered, ensures us about the need of a Japanese restaurant in Vaasa.

The study was also to help us in developing a complete business strategy for a Japanese restaurant. First of all, the theory of this thesis gave us a deeper understanding of our product and in which way we can introduce, as well as develop it, in the local market effectively and efficiently. After that, the research provides us a fuller image of our potential market, Vaasa.

As people strongly value the efficiency of the meal, especially at lunch, we should develop some products that are fast to serve, meet people's expectation for tastes and healthiness, and with a reasonable price. Diners also value the convenience when it comes to eating out, meaning close to workplace in case of lunch, or generally, close to the place where they decide to have a meal. It is a very important factor that we have to consider when planning our marketing plan. Also, as the result of our research shows, people are interested in Japanese cuisine not only because of its taste, but also because of their curiosity and Japanese culture. This raises a challenge for us in keeping the restaurant always fresh and interesting. It means besides offering good food and good service, the restaurant should be the place where people can somehow learn about the Japanese culture. It can be in the interior décor of the restaurant, in the background music, or in the way customers are served. The staffs also need to have a basic knowledge of Japanese culture, besides a must in fully understanding its cuisine. In summary, all findings in this thesis would be carefully considered when we draw up our developed business plan, of which the outline is included in Appendix II.

As *sushi* and Japanese foods are still quite new to most people, basic information, such as proper ways to enjoy the foods, what types of foods they are, etc. are necessary. In this case, this thesis can serve as a 'guidebook' where people find very basic description of Japanese cuisine and its typical of foods, as well as common dining etiquette to help avoid awkward moments due to the lack of experience. For people who are interested in Japanese cuisine and want to learn more about it, there is a list of references where more interesting and deeper knowledge can be found. Besides, some outstanding points mentioned in our thesis could bring some idea for other students or researchers who are looking for a topic to write about.

## **7.2 Suggestion for further studies and research**

*Sushi* and *sashimi* have been known as a symbol of Japanese cuisine. There are many interesting aspects that make them a true form of art rather than merely a national dish. Thousands of books and articles about *sushi* and *sashimi* have been

published and it seems never enough. As *sushi* and *sashimi* get more and more popular in Finland, it would be interesting to find out how these foods can fit into Finnish diet or what factors make them popular in Finland.

*Kaiseki* is another phenomenon of Japanese cuisine. Unlike *sushi* and *sashimi* which somehow have become globalized, *kaiseki* always stays true to the very traditional Japanese cooking. Compared with a fine dining meal in Western countries, this is a very high class meal where only the best are served. However, not so many foreign people have heard about this meal. Therefore, students or researchers could make a topic about *kaiseki* in Finland in particular, or in Europe in general.

Every diet has pros and cons. And Japanese diet is no exception. Despite many health benefits, it still has its own disadvantages. It could be the high consumption of fermented ingredients which results in a high sodium meal, or the lack of protein and dairy products in daily diet which limits the body growth. There are many articles about Japanese diet and its benefits, but only a few mentions about its weaknesses. What are the strong and weak points of Japanese diet and how to balance them, or combine with other diets, is a question to be answered.

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## APPENDIX I Questionnaire (English, Finnish, Swedish)

Dear respondents,

We are doing a survey about sushi and Japanese food for our final thesis project. In the project we are drawing up a business plan for our Japanese restaurant, Oishi Yapan. We would like to learn about your dining habit in general, as well as the knowledge, opinion and expectations from you, our potential customers, about sushi and Japanese food. This information will help us greatly in recognising the market situation and consumers' needs, so that we could decide a comprehensive realistic business strategy accordingly.

The questionnaire is structured in 3 parts, enquiring different information. It would take maximum 15 minutes. Please fill in with patience. After you've completed it, please return your answer to [lichtgestalt1209@hotmail.com](mailto:lichtgestalt1209@hotmail.com) before **1.5.2011!** You will receive a code after you return your answer. As a reward we give 20% discount for one meal of each respondent in our restaurant. You will get the discount by showing the code in our restaurant.

Best regards,

Qing Zou and Phuong Tran

# QUESTIONNAIRE

---

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. *Age* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Occupation* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Area of residence* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *Gender*
  - Male
  - Female

## DINING HABIT

1. *How often do you generally dine out?*
  - For lunch
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple of times a year, but not every month
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 3 times a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 times a week
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 times a week
  - For dinner
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple of times a year, but not every month
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 3 times a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 times a week
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 times a week
2. *Please choose 3 types of restaurant you normally mostly choose to dine out:*
  - For lunch
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet	<input type="checkbox"/> Fast food	<input type="checkbox"/> Café	<input type="checkbox"/> Casual a la carte	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine dining a la carte
---------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------	--	---
  - For dinner

Buffet    Fast food    Café    Casual a la carte    Fine dining a la carte

3. ***How much do you think people would pay for a meal/person? Please choose one answer only***

- For lunch       <6€    6€ – 8€    8€ – 10€    10€ – 12€    >12€
- For dinner      <10€    10€ – 20€    20€ – 30€    30€ – 40€    >40€

4. ***What are the most important values of a good restaurant?***

***Please rank the following factors from 1 as the most important values to 8 as the least important value.***

- For lunch:  
\_\_ Menu\_\_ Taste\_\_ Service\_\_ Atmosphere\_\_ Price\_\_ Healthiness\_\_ Location\_\_ Interior decor
- For dinner:  
\_\_ Menu\_\_ Taste\_\_ Service\_\_ Atmosphere\_\_ Price\_\_ Healthiness\_\_ Location\_\_ Interior decor

***Now, please choose the ideally describable words for each value. You can choose more than 1 answer in each value.***

**MENU**

- For lunch
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Many items	<input type="checkbox"/> Stable	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed menu/ meal set
<input type="checkbox"/> A few items	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing	<input type="checkbox"/> A la carte/ Free choice
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:		
- For dinner
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Many items	<input type="checkbox"/> Stable	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed menu/ meal set
<input type="checkbox"/> A few items	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing	<input type="checkbox"/> A la carte/ Free choice
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:		

**TASTE**

- For lunch  
 Strong    Light    Salty    Sour    Sweet    Spicy    Other, please specify:
- For dinner  
 Strong    Light    Salty    Sour    Sweet    Spicy    Other, please specify:

**SERVICE**

- For lunch  
 Self-service    Semi self-service    Table service    Other, please specify:
- For dinner  
 Self-service    Semi self-service    Table service    Other, please specify:

**ATMOSPHERE**

- For lunch  
 Lively    Calm    Cosy    Crowded    Spacious    Other, please specify:
- For dinner  
 Lively    Calm    Cosy    Crowded    Spacious    Other, please specify:

**PRICE**

*Please specify what you consider as high, reasonable and low price*

- For lunch  
High: \_\_\_\_\_ Reasonable: \_\_\_\_\_ Low: \_\_\_\_\_
- For dinner  
High: \_\_\_\_\_ Reasonable: \_\_\_\_\_ Low: \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTHINESS**

*Please specify what you consider as a healthy meal*

- For lunch: \_\_\_\_\_
- For dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION**

- For lunch  
 Close to center    Close to home    Close to workplace    Nearby at the deciding moment  
 Crowded area    Quiet area    Other, please specify:
- For dinner  
 Close to center    Close to home    Close to workplace    Nearby at the deciding moment  
 Crowded area    Quiet area    Other, please specify:

**INTERIOR DECOR**

- For lunch  
 Simple    Fancy    Traditional    Modern    Bright    Dim  
 Plain    Colorful    With music    Without music    Other, please specify:
- For dinner  
 Simple    Fancy    Traditional    Modern    Bright    Dim  
 Plain    Colorful    With music    Without music    Other, please specify:

**5. What is your preference in deciding a restaurant to dine out? Please choose the sentence that describes you the best.**

- I always eat in the same restaurant.
- I like to change among the restaurants that offer the same type of food.
- I like to change among the restaurants that offer different types of food.

**6. Please choose your favourite type(s) of food:**

- Finnish    Other European cuisine    American    Mexican
- Asian    Pizza/Kebab    Hamburger

## SUSHI AND JAPANESE CUISINE

**1. *Have you ever eaten:***

Sushi?	Japanese food?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, and I don't care about trying it out
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, but I'd like to try it
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I have tried once
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I have eaten many times

§ If your answer was yes, please continue.

§ If no but you'd like to try, please answer question 5) and 6).

§ If no and it's not interesting for you to try, you've already given enough information. Thank you for your time!

**2. *Where did you have your***

Sushi?	Japanese food?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-made at home
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ready-made from shops or supermarkets
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In a restaurant in Vaasa
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In a restaurant outside Vaasa

**3. *According to your experience, do you think the price was reasonable for :***

Taste of food	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Time waited	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Distance travelled	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. *Would you like to have the same experience again?***

- Yes, from the same place.  
 Yes, but from a different place.  
 No, I didn't like it at all.

**5. *How often would you like to include Japanese cuisine into your diet?***

<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple of times a year, but not every month
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 3 times a month	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 times a week
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 times a week

**6. *What factors make you choose Japanese food?***

Taste  Healthiness  Japanese culture  Curiosity  Variation in diet

You have reached to the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Hyv ä vastaajamme,

Avasimme viime kes ä n ä opintojemme ohessa Vaasaan japanilaisen ravintolan nimelt ä Oishii Japan. Nyt opintomme Vaasan ammattikorkeakoulussa hotelli- ja ravintola-alaa ovat loppuillaan ja teemme päät ä ty ö h ö m m e liittäv ä n kyselyn vaasalaisten ravintolatottumuksista sek ä kiinnostuksesta japanilaiseen ruokaan ja sushiin. Kyselyn tarkoituksena on auttaa meit ä huomioimaan alueen asukkaiden tarpeet ja toiveet entist ä paremmin ja tehd ä ravintolastamme entist ä houkuttelevampi sek ä uusille, ett ä vanhoille asiakkaillemme.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie n. 5-10 minuuttia. Täytetty ä si kyselyn palauta se samaan paikkaan, josta sen saitkin, viimeist ä ä n 4.4.2011. Kyselyyn on liitetty kuponki, jolla voit sy ö d ä alennettuun hintaan ravintolassamme.

Yst ä v ä llisin terveisin,

Qing Zou and Phuong Tran, Oishii Japanin omistajat

## KYSELY

### TAUSTATIEDOT

1. *Ik ä* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Ammatti* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Asuinpaikka* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *Sukupuoli*  
 Mies  Nainen

### RUOKAILU TOTTUMUKSET

#### 5. *Kuinka usein käyt sy ö n ä s ä ulkona?*

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> En koskaan	<input type="checkbox"/> Pari kertaa vuodessa, mutta en joka kuukausi
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 -2 kertaa viikossa
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 viikossa	<input type="checkbox"/> Useammin kuin 5 kertaa viikossa
- Pä v ä llinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> En koskaan	<input type="checkbox"/> Pari kertaa vuodessa, mutta en joka kuukausi
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 -2 kertaa viikossa
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 viikossa	<input type="checkbox"/> Useammin kuin 5 kertaa viikossa

#### 6. *Valitse 3 ravintolaa, jonka tyylisiss ä k ä y t normaalisti useimmiten sy ö n ä s ä*

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet	<input type="checkbox"/> Pikaruokala	<input type="checkbox"/> Kahvila
<input type="checkbox"/> Tavallinen a la carte ravintola	<input type="checkbox"/> Hieno a la carte ravintola	
- Pä v ä llinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet	<input type="checkbox"/> Pikaruokala	<input type="checkbox"/> Kahvila
<input type="checkbox"/> Tavallinen a la carte ravintola	<input type="checkbox"/> Hieno a la carte ravintola	

7. *Kuinka paljon arvelet ihmisten olevan valmiita maksamaan ateriasta/1 henkilö? Valitse yksi vaihtoehto.*

Lounaasta  <6€  6€ – 8€  8€ – 10€  10€ – 12€  >12€

Päivästä  <10€  10€ – 20€  20€ – 30€  30€ – 40€  >40€

8. *Mitkä ovat hyvien ravintolan tärkeimmät ominaisuudet? Sijoita seuraavat tekijät numerosta 8 alkaen tärkein ja numero 1 vähiten tärkein.*

- Lounas  
\_\_ Ruokalista \_\_ Maku \_\_ Palvelu \_\_ Ilmapiiri \_\_ Hintaa \_\_ Terveellisyys \_\_ Sijainti \_\_ Sisustus
- Päiväinen:  
\_\_ Ruokalista \_\_ Maku \_\_ Palvelu \_\_ Ilmapiiri \_\_ Hintaa \_\_ Terveellisyys \_\_ Sijainti \_\_ Sisustus

❖ *Valitse seuraavaksi kohdat, jotka kuvaavat parhaiten jokaista näistä ominaisuuksista. Voit valita joka kohtaan enemmän kuin yhden sopivan.*

❖ **RUOKALISTA**

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Monta vaihtoehtoa	<input type="checkbox"/> Ennalta määritelty ja hinnoiteltu ateriakokonaisuus	<input type="checkbox"/> Pysyvä
<input type="checkbox"/> Muutama vaihtoehto	<input type="checkbox"/> A la carte/itse valittu ateriakokonaisuus	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaihtuva
<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä		

- Päiväinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Monta vaihtoehtoa	<input type="checkbox"/> Ennalta määritelty ja hinnoiteltu ateriakokonaisuus	<input type="checkbox"/> Pysyvä
<input type="checkbox"/> Muutama vaihtoehto	<input type="checkbox"/> A la carte/itse valittu ateriakokonaisuus	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaihtuva
<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä		

❖ **MAKU**

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Vahva	<input type="checkbox"/> Mieto	<input type="checkbox"/> Suolainen	<input type="checkbox"/> Hapan	<input type="checkbox"/> Makea	<input type="checkbox"/> Mausteinen	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------
- Päiväinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Vahva	<input type="checkbox"/> Mieto	<input type="checkbox"/> Suolainen	<input type="checkbox"/> Hapan	<input type="checkbox"/> Makea	<input type="checkbox"/> Mausteinen	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

❖ **PALVELU**

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Itsepalvelu	<input type="checkbox"/> Osittain itsepalvelu	<input type="checkbox"/> Tarjoilu pöytiin	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
--------------------------------------	---	---	------------------------------------
- Päiväinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Itsepalvelu	<input type="checkbox"/> Osittain itsepalvelu	<input type="checkbox"/> Tarjoilu pöytiin	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
--------------------------------------	---	---	------------------------------------

❖ **ILMAPIIRI**

- Lounas
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Eloisa	<input type="checkbox"/> Rauhallinen	<input type="checkbox"/> Kotoisa	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiivistunnelmainen	<input type="checkbox"/> Tilava	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	---	---------------------------------	------------------------------------
- Päiväinen
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Eloisa	<input type="checkbox"/> Rauhallinen	<input type="checkbox"/> Kotoisa	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiivistunnelmainen	<input type="checkbox"/> Tilava	<input type="checkbox"/> Muu, mikä
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	---	---------------------------------	------------------------------------

❖ **HINTA**

*Määrittele mitkä ovat mielestäsi korkeita, kohtuullisia tai matalia hintoja?*

- Lounas  
Korkea: \_\_\_\_\_ Kohtuullinen: \_\_\_\_\_ Matala: \_\_\_\_\_

- Päiväinen  
Korkea: \_\_\_\_\_ Kohtuullinen: \_\_\_\_\_ Matala: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **TERVEELLISYYS**

*Määrittele mielestäsi terveellinen ruoka:*

- Lounas: \_\_\_\_\_
- Päiväinen: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **SIJAINTI**

- Lounaan
  - Lähellä keskustaa  Lähellä kotia  Lähellä työpaikkaa
  - Lähistöllä juuri silloin hetkellä  Vilkaalla alueella  Rauhallisella alueella
  - Muu, mikä
- Päiväinen
  - Lähellä keskustaa  Lähellä kotia  Lähellä työpaikkaa
  - Lähistöllä juuri silloin hetkellä  Vilkaalla alueella  Rauhallisella alueella
  - Muu, mikä

❖ **SISUSTUS**

- Lounas
  - Yksinkertainen  Hienostunut  Perinteinen  Nykyaikainen
  - Valoisa  Hämärä  Tavallinen  Värikäs
  - Soitetaan musiikkia  Ilman musiikkia  Muu, mikä
- Päiväinen
  - Yksinkertainen  Hienostunut  Perinteinen  Nykyaikainen
  - Valoisa  Hämärä  Tavallinen  Värikäs
  - Soitetaan musiikkia  Ilman musiikkia  Muu, mikä

**9. Mikä on etusijalla, kun päättää ravintolan, jossa haluaisit ruokailla? Valitse itseesi parhaiten sopiva lause.**

- Syön aina samassa ravintolassa.
- Syön mielelläni eri ravintoloissa, jotka tarjoavat samanlaista ruokaa.
- Syön mielelläni eri ravintoloissa, jotka tarjoavat erilaista ruokaa.

**10. Valitse 1-3 tyypisistä ruuuista pidät eniten:**

- Suomalainen  Muu eurooppalainen ruoka  Amerikkalainen  Meksikolainen
- Aasialainen  Pizza/Kebab  Hampurilainen  Muu, mikä

## SUSHI JA JAPANILAINEN RUOKAKULTTUURI

### 11. Oletko syönyt koskaan:

Sushia?	Japanilaista ruokaa?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	En, enkä ole kiinnostunut kokeilemaan
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	En, mutta haluaisin kokeilla
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kyllä olen kokeillut kerran
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kyllä olen syönyt monta kertaa

§ Jatka eteenpäin, jos vastasit kyllä

§ Jos vastasit ei, mutta haluaisit kokeilla vastaa kysymyksiin 5 ja 6.

§ Jos vastasit ei ja et ole kiinnostunut kokeilemaan, saimme jo kaiken tarvittavan informaation. Kiitos ajastasi!

### 12. Missä sait:

Sushia?	Japanilaista ruokaa?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Itsetehtynä kotona
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kaupan tai marketin valmisruokaa
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ravintolassa Vaasassa
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ravintolassa muualla kuin Vaasassa

### 13. Oliko hinta mielestäsi kohtuullinen seuraavia kohtia ajatellen:

Ruuan maku?	<input type="checkbox"/> Kyllä	Odotusaika?	<input type="checkbox"/> Kyllä	Väimätkä?	<input type="checkbox"/> Kyllä
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ei		<input type="checkbox"/> Ei		<input type="checkbox"/> Ei

### 14. Haluaisitko kokea saman uudestaan?

- Kyllä samassa paikassa.
- Kyllä mutta eri paikassa.
- En, en pitänyt siitä yhtään.

### 15. Kuinka usein haluaisit syödä Japanilaista ruokaa?

- En koskaan
- 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa
- 3-5 viikossa
- Pari kertaa vuodessa, mutta en joka kuukausi
- 1-2 kertaa viikossa
- Useammin kuin 5 kertaa viikossa

### 16. Millä perusteella valitset japanilaisen ruuan?

- Maku
- Uteliaisuus
- Terveellisyys
- Vaihtelu ruokavaliossa
- Japanilainen kulttuuri

**Olet päässyt kyselyn loppuun. kiitoksia ajastasi ja yhteistyöstä!**

Oishi Yapan  
Kauppapuistikko 16 as 13 (sisäpiha)  
**-20% yhdelle aterialle**

Bästa svarande,

I våra studier vid Vasa yrkeshögskola ingår att göra ett lärdomsprov. För detta lärdomsprov har vi valt att göra en undersökning om sushi och japansk mat. Projektet går ut på att göra upp en affärsplan till vår japanska restaurang Oishi Yapan. Vi är intresserade av att veta mer om Era matvanor, åsikter, kunskaper och förväntningar som gäller sushi och japansk mat. Med hjälp av era svar kan vi förstå marknaden och konsumentbehovet bättre, och denna information kan även hjälpa oss att välja en tillräckligt omfattande och realistisk affärsstrategi för vår restaurang.

Enkäten är uppdelad i 3 delar, enligt olika typer av frågor. Det tar ca 5-10 minuter att fylla i den. Vänligen fyll i den noggrant. När enkäten är ifylld, vänligen returnera den i svarskuvertet till vår restaurang före 4.4.2011 och få ett överraskningspris!

Med vänlig hälsning,  
Qing Zou and Phuong Tran

# FRÅGEFORMULÄR

## BAKGRUNDSINFORMATION

1. *Ålder* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Yrke* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Bostadsort* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *Kön:*            Man                    Kvinna

## MATVANOR

### 5. *Hur ofta äter du vanligtvis på restaurang?*

- Lunch
  - Aldrig    Några gånger/år, men inte varje månad    1 till 3 gånger/måna
  - 1 till 2 gånger/vecka    3 till 5 gånger/vecka    Mer än 5 gånger/vecka
- Middag
  - Aldrig    Några gånger/år, men inte varje månad    1 till 3 gånger/måna
  - 1 till 2 gånger/vecka    3 till 5 gånger/vecka    Mer än 5 gånger/vecka

### 6. *Välj 3 typer av restauranger du normalt går till när du äter ute?*

- Lunch
  - Buffé    Snabbmat    Café    Enklare a la carte    Lyxigt a la carte
- Middag
  - Buffé    Snabbmat    Café    Enklare a la carte    Lyxigt a la carte

### 7. *Hur mycket tror du att en person skulle kunna betala för en måltid? Vänligen välj endast ett svar*

- För lunch    <6€    6€ – 8€    8€ – 10€    10€ – 12€    >12€
- För middag    <10€    10€ – 20€    20€ – 30€    30€ – 40€    >40€

8. Vad är viktigast för en bra restaurang?

Rangordna följande faktorer från 8 – viktigaste faktorn till 1 – minst viktiga faktorn.

- Lunch:  
\_\_ Meny \_\_ Smak \_\_ Service \_\_ Atmosfär \_\_ Pris \_\_ Hälsosam \_\_ Plats \_\_ Inredning
- Middag:  
\_\_ Meny \_\_ Smak \_\_ Service \_\_ Atmosfär \_\_ Pris \_\_ Hälsosam \_\_ Plats \_\_ Inredning

❖ **Välj de alternativ som bäst beskriver följande faktorer. Du kan välja flere än 1 svarsalternativ.**

❖ **MENY**

- Lunch
  - Många alternativ
  - Några alternativ
  - Samma meny
  - Varierande
  - Fast meny/ mättid
  - A la carte/ Valbart
  - Annat, vad:
- Middag
  - Många alternativ
  - Några alternativ
  - Samma meny
  - Varierande
  - Fast meny/ mättid
  - A la carte/ Valbart
  - Annat, vad:

❖ **SMAK**

- Lunch
  - Stark
  - Mild
  - Salt
  - Syrlig
  - Söt
  - Kryddad
  - Annat, vad:
- Middag
  - Stark
  - Mild
  - Salt
  - Syrlig
  - Söt
  - Kryddad
  - Annat, vad:

❖ **SERVICE**

- Lunch
  - Självbetjäning
  - Delvis självbetjäning
  - Bordsservering
  - Annat, vad:
- Middag
  - Självbetjäning
  - Delvis självbetjäning
  - Bordsservering
  - Annat, vad:

❖ **ATMOSFÄR**

- Lunch
  - Livlig
  - Lugn
  - Mysig
  - Fullsatt
  - Rymlig
  - Annat, vad:
- Middag
  - Livlig
  - Lugn
  - Mysig
  - Fullsatt
  - Rymlig
  - Annat, vad:

❖ **PRIS**

Ange vad du anser är ett högt, rimligt och lågt pris

- Lunch  
Högt: \_\_\_\_\_ Rimligt: \_\_\_\_\_ Lågt: \_\_\_\_\_
- Middag  
Högt: \_\_\_\_\_ Rimligt: \_\_\_\_\_ Lågt: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **HÄLSOSAM**

*Vad anser du är sund mat?*

- Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_
- Middag: \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **PLATS**

- Lunch

- Nära till centrum     Nära till jobbet     Livligt område     Nära hemmet  
 Nära till hands vid beslutsögonblicket     Lugnt område     Annat, vad:

- Middag

- Nära till centrum     Nära till jobbet     Livligt område     Nära hemmet  
 Nära till hands vid beslutsögonblicket     Lugnt område     Annat, vad:

❖ **INREDNING**

- Lunch

- Enkel     Lyxig     Traditionell     Modern     Ljus     Dunkel  
 Färglös     Färggrann     Med musik     Utan musik     Annat, vad:

- Middag

- Enkel     Lyxig     Traditionell     Modern     Ljus     Dunkel  
 Färglös     Färggrann     Med musik     Utan musik     Annat, vad:

**9. Vilka är dina preferenser vid val av restaurang? Välj den mening som beskriver dig bäst.**

- Jag äter alltid på samma restaurang.  
 Jag gillar att växla mellan restauranger som erbjuder ungefär likadan mat.  
 Jag gillar att växla mellan restauranger som erbjuder olika sorters mat.

**10. Vilken/Vilka är din favoritmaträtt/rätter? Välj 1-3 typer**

- Fins                       Annan europeisk mat     Amerikansk     Mexikansk     Asiatisk  
 Pizza/Kebab     Hamburgare     Annan, vad:

## SUSHI OCH JAPANSK MAT

### 11. Har du någonsin ätit:

Sushi?	Japansk mat?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nej, och jag vill inte smaka heller.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nej, men jag skulle vilja prova.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ja, jag har provat en gång
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ja, jag har ätit den många gånger

§ Om du svarade ja, var god fortsätt att svara

§ Om du svarade nej, men du skulle vilja prova, fortsätt till frågorna 15) och 16).

§ Om du svarade nej och du inte är intresserad av att prova, tackar vi för din tid med att svara på denna enkät här!

### 12. Var har du ätit

Sushi?	Japansk mat?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Som hemlagad mat.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Färdiglagad från butiken
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	På en restaurang i Vasa
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	På en restaurang utanför Vasa

### 13. Tyckte du priset var rimligt utgående från:

Smaken	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja	Väntetiden	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja	Avståndet (till t.ex.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ja
	<input type="checkbox"/> Nej		<input type="checkbox"/> Nej	restaurangen, butiken)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nej

### 14. Skulle du vilja prova på samma sak igen?

- Ja, från samma ställe  
 Ja, men från ett annat ställe  
 Nej, jag tyckte inte om det

### 15. Hur ofta skulle du kunna tänka dig att äta japansk mat?

- Aldrig     Några gånger/år, men inte varje månad     1 till 3 gånger/månad  
 1 till 2 gånger/vecka     3 till 5 gånger/vecka     Mer än 5 gånger/vecka

### 16. Vad fick dig att vilja att äta japansk mat? Du kan välja fler än ett svar

- Smak     Hälsoämnen     Japansk kultur  
 Nyfikenhet     Variation i kosten

Du har nu kommit till slutet av frågeformuläret. Tack för din tid och medverkande i denna undersökning!

## **APPENDIX II Business Plan Outline**

### **1. Basic Information**

- 1.1. Business Idea
- 1.2. Company Form
- 1.3. Knowledge Base
- 1.4. Reasons for Establishment

### **2. Description of Products and Services**

- 2.1. Description
- 2.2. Usage
- 2.3. Product Development
- 2.4. Sales Opportunities

### **3. Market Research and Analysis**

- 3.1. Customers
- 3.2. Size of the Market and Changes
- 3.3. Competition
- 3.4. Estimation of Share of the Market and Selling Volume
- 3.5. Evaluation of the Market

### **4. Selling and Marketing Plan**

- 4.1. Personal Strategy for Marketing
- 4.2. Pricing
- 4.3. Distribution Channel
- 4.4. Maintenance and Guarantee
- 4.5. Sales Promotion
- 4.6. Operating Plan for Production
- 4.7. Location

### **5. Operating Place and Production Investments**

- 5.1. Production Plans
- 5.2. Quality Control
- 5.3. Purchases

5.4. Employees

**6. Management and Organization**

6.1. Organization

6.2. Management

6.3. Specialists and Consultants

**7. Economic Estimations**

7.1. Book-keeping

7.2. Initial Outlay and its Financing

7.3. Examination of the Business Idea in Figures

7.4. Profitability Calculation

7.5. Cashflow Analysis

**8. SWOT Analysis**

8.1. Strength

8.2. Weakness

8.3. Opportunities

8.4. Threats