

# **How to open a Spanish restaurant in the Lahti region**

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## Abstract

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Title of the thesis How to open a Spanish restaurant in the Lahti region		
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<p>This thesis focuses on preparing a kind of roadmap for entrepreneurs who want to enter the restaurant business in the Nordic country of Finland. This thesis contains the theoretical material, necessary to know the basics before and during the opening of a restaurant in Finland.</p> <p>In the first part, in the introduction, the reader can find out why the author has decided to do this thesis, the objectives and the questions he wants to solve during the whole work.</p> <p>The report contains theoretical information about the value proposition that should be given to any business in the catering world and about how to adapt the restaurant to the industry 4.0, so important in this covid19 era and the changing times to come.</p> <p>In the empirical part, the author develops all the knowledge acquired during the theoretical part, helping, and complementing the work with qualitative research methods such as a survey of the restaurant's potential customers and also interviews with owners of both Spanish and Finnish restaurants in order to reach the results and conclusions that can be found in the same part.</p> <p>Thanks to the previous studies, the conclusions says that it would be viable to open a Spanish restaurant in the Lahti region, largely because there is very little competition with the same style of cuisine. That it is necessary to invest in technology to be able to adapt to current changes and be part of the 4.0 industry, but also to take advantage of this investment to differentiate from other restaurants, which in Lahti, very few have invested considerably.</p>		
Lahti, food establishments, restaurant sector, Spanish cuisine, swot analysis, industry 4.0, covid19		

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Appendix 2. Interview with Spanish entrepreneurs and/or owners in the restaurant sector.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research background

It seems that opening a restaurant is a crazy idea these days. There are hundreds of papers and articles that bring out the famous fact that four out of five restaurants close in their early years. But that myth is debunked in Adam Ozimek's article in Forbes magazine. Eating out has become a way of life for families. "Today, more meals than ever are being eaten away from home." (Walker 2011.)

Today, Spanish cuisine is one of the most well-recognized worldwide, as is well demonstrated in the List of the 50 best restaurants in the world, where seven restaurants on the Iberian Peninsula stand out. (The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2020.). And it is one of the reasons why betting on opening a restaurant in that country is a reasonable idea. The illusion of the author, among others, is to be able to bring Spanish cuisine closer to Finland.

The modern city in southern Finland offers optimal conditions for entrepreneurs. Located in eighth place in the cities with the most inhabitants in the country, it attracts visitors from all over the world with more than 200 sporting events that are repeated year after year, as important as the Lahti Ski Games or winter sports world championships. In addition to great cultural events. (Lahti my city 2019)

In the long term, with the experience and all the knowledge acquired in this thesis, the author would like to be able to carry out this work to reality and that it can be used for other entrepreneurs who have similar projects.

### 1.2 Objectives and research questions

The author of this thesis wants to demonstrate the reliability of opening a typical Spanish restaurant in the city of Lahti, close to the country's capital and well connected with other major cities such as Tampere or Jyväskylä.

So, the main research objective will be to provide as much information as possible on starting a Spanish restaurant in Lahti. How to adapt the kitchen here and differentiate itself from the rest of the restaurants. In addition, in these times of pandemic, where the restaurant sector has been affected, the idea is to develop the idea of carrying out the restaurant towards industry 4.0 to solve the problems that covid-19 may cause and achieve an effective restaurant in possible similar future situations. The author also tries to reflect in the thesis, the differences between Finland and Spain when opening a restaurant.

- How to open a Spanish restaurant in Lahti?

The one above is the main question, and three sub-questions appear below to solve and complement the first one:

- How to give a good value proposition to the restaurant?
- How to adapt the restaurant to industry 4.0?
- What is the difference between opening a restaurant in Spain and Finland?

The three questions help the author to complement the main question. The first sub-question will help solve the author's problem of how the restaurant will differentiate itself from other restaurants. The second one is a good question that comes at a good time, due to these pandemic times. In point 2.5 of the literature review you can find out what Industry 4.0 is all about and all the advantages it brings to being a successful restaurant. And the last one, the difference between opening a restaurant in Finland or Spain will help to answer the main question, both to the author or other readers of this thesis, and to be able to approach the conclusion of whether it is a good idea or not to open a Spanish restaurant in Finland from a more professional point of view, as entrepreneurs from both countries are interviewed.

### **Limitations**

The main boundaries of this research are that the author will be doing all the research on his own and obtaining the results by himself with no support of any professional to carry out the study. So, the author decided to exclude the part of the business plan, many of the similar studies focus the work on developing one, but not in this case, since it would not fit in this kind of thesis and would require much more time and research. The researcher seeks to provide a kind of roadmap for other entrepreneurs so that they can draw their conclusions when opening a restaurant in Lahti.

### 1.3 Theory basis and methods

To write the second point (literature review), the author of this thesis has all kinds of academic articles, articles from professional magazines, books, and research papers to analyse and internalize the knowledge to carry out the thesis.

In addition, as regards qualitative research, the author collects information from four interviews with owners and entrepreneurs of the restaurant sector, both in Finland and in Spain. To complement the empirical part, the work contains a survey, designed to know the points of view of the potential costumers and work on them. Will be conducted via Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram to arrive as more potential customers as possible. Moreover, the

survey has been sent to potential costumers that could arrive to Lahti as tourist. Also, a SWOT analysis is used to find out which aspects of the business need to be improved.

#### 1.4 Thesis structure

The author has divided the thesis as follows in the next figure (Figure 1).

The first point introduces the research background, defines the objectives and the main research questions. Also, the theory basis and methods that will be used to complete this thesis.

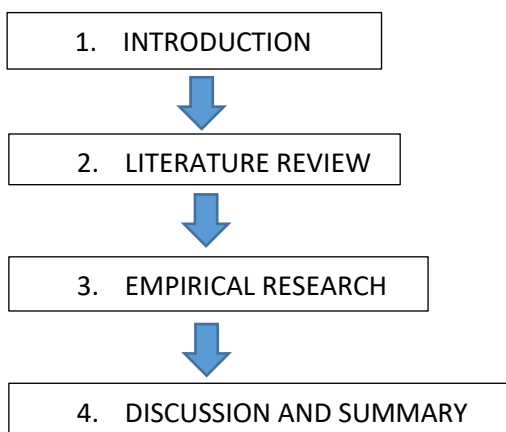


Figure 1 Thesis structure

In the second chapter, you will find all the theory (from the most basic to the most complete) from authors and professional material that will be used to carry out the research, as they will help to answer the author's main questions during the empirical re-search.

Then, in the empirical research, the author gathers all the knowledge from the literature review and complements it with his own data collection to carry out his own study and answer the research questions. The data collection is also composed of interviews and surveys.

Finally, as in every thesis, there is the discussion and the summary. In the discussion the author gives his own conclusions and the results of the work followed by the last point where the whole work is summarised. At the end of this thesis, you will find the references and appendix.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Restaurant sector in Finland

Modern restaurant culture is known to appear in Finland in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with first appearances in Turku and moved to Helsinki when it began the capital of Suomi. While the industry developed, new measures began to appear to restrict and control the great growth and new expansion of restaurants. Restaurants were places where excessive alcohol consumption and bad habits were consumed. So Finnish restaurants took a script twist and differentiated themselves from other European culinary cultures. (Jonathan H. Lutz 253).

Turning to the present, Finland has evolved along with Europe in the restaurant sector. The Finnish food culture is developing rapidly, both supply and demand, adapting to the new needs of customers, which are diversifying. They are looking for new experiences, tastes, and prices. Nowadays most of the population goes out to eat as part of everyday life, and goes beyond celebrating special occasions or similar, but already for the simple fact of cheering up the day to day. Single people and young people prefer to order take-out through services such as Foodora or Wolt, women, instead they tend to go out more to eat out. Citizens from big cities as Helsinki or Tampere are the ones that go out more often to restaurants. It is expected that in the coming years, society will visit cafes and restaurants more often. (Suomalaisten Odotukset Ravintoloille, Kespro 2020).

Based on the survey data, Finns can be divided into four different types of restaurant consumers: spontaneous consumers who want to experience, quality-conscious epicureans, practical binge eaters and home cooks. The spontaneous ones and the epicureans (People committed to enjoyment, especially derived from food and drinks.) are the most active when we talk about going out and search for new experiences. In contrast, the eating out behaviour of practical eaters is driven by the needs of the fulfilling needs and refill the energy. For the home cooks, eating out is not a commonplace. (How will a Finn eat outside in 2020?, Kespro 2020).

In Finland, as in Europe, there is a concentration of all types of restaurants, including chain and franchise restaurants, quick service restaurants, fast casual, family restaurants and ethnic restaurants. Ethnic restaurants serve national dishes from foreign countries, such as Mexican, Italian, Chinese or Spanish. Restaurants can be segmented in several categories and each restaurant can fall into more than one category. (The Restaurant: From Concept to Operation, Walker J. R. 2011, 45).

## 2.2 Spanish restaurant sector

Looking back in the past, Spanish cuisine has experienced several influences. With the invasions of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs, Spanish cuisine can boast an infinity of products imported along with the invasions. With the discovery of the Americas, Spain also imported products that are now main ingredients of many traditional dishes. (Traditional Food in Europe. Weichselbaum, Benelam, & Soares Costa 2005, 53–56).

In a Spanish bar, tapas are a must. These are small amounts of food served before eating, usually accompanied by a drink (wine or beer). It is a tradition to go from bar to bar with friends tasting different tapas. Tortilla de patatas, “croquetas”, “patatas bravas”, “jamón ibérico”, cheeses, olives, “calamares” or mussels are some of the most famous and sold in Spain. (Traditional Food in Europe. Weichselbaum, Benelam, & Soares Costa, 2005 53–56).

When talking about the Spanish restaurant sector, one cannot forget to talk about its diet. Completely different from the diet of other European countries, it is given so much importance that in 2010 the Mediterranean Diet was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inclusion of the Mediterranean diet on the prestigious UNESCO list is an excellent example of the recognition given to the gastronomic culture of the countries (Spain among them) that border the Mediterranean Sea. According to UNESCO "The Mediterranean diet is not only about food, it is also a cultural element that encourages social interaction". "The Mediterranean diet is a set of skills, knowledge, practices and traditions related to human nutrition, ranging from the land to the table, encompassing crops, harvests and fisheries, as well as the preservation, processing and preparation of food and, in particular, the consumption of food. (UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) 2020).

## 2.3 Setting up a food business in Finland

“Food establishments mean any building or premises or part thereof or other outdoor or indoor space in which food meant for sale or conveyance is prepared, stored, transported, marketed, served, or otherwise handled. Food establishments must be approved by the competent control authority before the beginning of operations or any substantial change in operations.” (Finnish food authority 2019).



## Food premises

The first step when you decide to open a restaurant in Finland is to know each of the premises to start your business. It is possible to ask for help from a food inspector when planning the premises, but this will raise the costs even more, so at this point the author writes about all the steps to be followed.

In this case, a Spanish food restaurant that uses fresh food and non-frozen meat or fish must find the restaurant premises suitable for it, such a large kitchen with cutting and cleaning areas. When processing and storing the food, it is vital to ensure that it will not be in possible contact with dust, bacteria, viruses, or substances that damage the food. For this purpose, the restaurant should have ample space to separate cooked and uncooked food. The food should also be separated according to the temperatures required, which is why you will need to have more than one storage place and each one will be monitored with a thermometer. You should be aware that the cold chain cannot be broken at any time. (Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira 2017).

When you are planning to buy a restaurant, you should consider the need for sufficient washing points (sinks) as the new regulations require three washing points: one for hand washing, one for food and one for dishes and cooking utensils. If they have to be built anew, the works are complicated and increase the costs. If it is not possible to have three washing points, it is true that one washing point can be shared for cleaning vegetables and dishes, but it must be disinfected between one washing point and another. Washing points should be accompanied by hand soap and paper for drying. There should also be a waste bin nearby. (Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira 2017).

Continuing with the premises, the premises should have toilet facilities, if the restaurant can accommodate more than six people, a toilet for the customers is also needed. The toilet should always be placed as far away as possible from the kitchen. If this is not possible, you can talk to the inspector for advice on the best option. In shopping centres, toilet facilities can be shared with other establishments in the same shopping centre. So, when you are designing the facilities, remember this and don't forget a dressing room where you can leave your street clothes and put on your work clothes. (Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira 2017).

Finally, as regards the sale of alcohol, the restaurant needs to have the serving license issued by AVI, due to serving alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of over 2.8% is a licenced business activity. – the Regional State Administrative Agencies. "The purpose of the Alcohol Act is to prevent detrimental societal, social and health effects caused by

alcoholic substances by controlling the consumption of alcohol. Valvira is tasked with performing a number of licensing, supervisory and guidance activities, as set out in the Alcohol Act.”. And there is also the possibility to ask for the license to serve alcohol in extended serving hours. (Valvira Alcohol 2021).

### **Operations**

The surface materials of the facilities should be non-toxic and easy to clean (and better if they can be industrially cleaned). If they do not repel water well and are not suitable materials, they absorb dust and bacteria that will be passed on to the food. Damaged surfaces should also be replaced. Plastic boards are often the best and easiest solution to these problems, as they are easy to clean, even in the dishwasher. (Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira 2017).

When looking at the premises for the restaurant, sufficient ventilation should be taken into account. This is an important premise for the preservation of the food, as it prevents humidity. It is also important to prevent pests (rats, mice, cockroaches...) to avoid dirt, bacteria and viruses be in contact with food. When talking about the operations, remember to trace all the food you buy, to be able to demonstrate the origin from they were purchased. An effective traceability helps to avoid having poor quality ingredients or any kind of bacteria in the kitchen. Logically, but not least, we should mention that the information we give on the menu must be clear and concise. You must be able to provide customers with detailed information on what each dish contains to avoid any problems with allergies or other safety measures. When providing a home delivery service, you must also detail the ingredients that may cause any kind of intolerance. When providing a home-delivery service, do not forget about the safety of the food during the project. Make sure that everything is clean and protected from any dirt that could damage the food. Also ensure that the right temperature is maintained so as not to break the cold chain. (Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira 2017).

### **2.4 Value proposition**

One of the first steps when opening a restaurant, or not only a restaurant, but any business that works for a consumer, must establish a value proposition to position itself in the market, both the business and the product it offers.

Mission and value proposition seem to be the same thing but are not. The mission defines how the business is going to offer its product in a specific market, whereas the value proposition reflects why consumers should engage with that business. For a restaurant, the value proposition should be the one that best suits the selected market segment in order to

create a reason for the public to choose you among other options. A consistent group of customers equates to a consistent revenue stream. (Restaurant hospitality, A. Barmak 2014).

All businesses must find a way to attract new customers and remain competitive and profitable. Today, consumers have much more information and therefore their decisions can change in a short time and they have more options to choose from. However, the decision they make is not the final one, as they continue to try other experiences. To be competitive, restaurants must understand the uniqueness of each of their customers. (Consuming hospitality: learning from post-modernism? Alistair Williams 2001).

According to Arora and Singer, the success of a restaurant depends on managers' understanding of their customers' needs, expectations, and meeting these needs better than their competitors. (Customer Satisfaction and Value as Drivers of Business Success for Fine Dining Restaurants, Arora & Singer 2006).

Talking about giving a value proposition to the business, the vision, mission, and values must also be considered. All three are important as they are the first step of the strategic plan. The mission is the reason to be of the company, the purpose and defines what it intends to accomplish in a specific environment. It answers the questions of why the company has been created. By defining the company's personality, it allows the identification of its potential customers as they identify with its mission and become loyal to it. The vision defines where the company wants to establish itself in the market in the medium-long term and is used to guide strategic growth decisions. It consists of establishing the principles, ethical and moral criteria that will govern the company. They indicate the code of conduct to be followed in the company. To the extent that it is willing to do to achieve these objectives. (Ética Profesional y Empresarial. Teoría y casos de estudio, Maldonado, Jose Ángel 2017).

## 2.5 4.0 Industry

The term 4.0 Industry refers to the transformation of the entire industry via artificial intelligence. A new way of organising the means of production with the emergence of smart factories or factories of the future, giving rise to this industrial revolution 4.0. This revolution is marked by the emergence of new technologies such as robotics or artificial intelligence and companies must adapt to this in order not to lose the edge of the market and become obsolete. In academic papers, it is still determined as an emerging concept. (From industry 4.0 to tourism 4.0, Saša Zupan Korže 2019, 29).

The fourth revolution is very important as it will not only affect large factories, but also all sectors and society.

#### **4.0 Industry in restaurants**

Leaving aside large companies and factories, this section is going to focus on how this Industry 4.0 affects tourism, more specifically restaurants, and mainly how to adapt it to the restaurant to defend itself from the covid19, as this is a priority issue in these times.

“The Restaurant of the Future is coming soon. There is a strong desire among consumers to get back out to restaurants and to be with friends and family again, but this will be done slowly and with caution for the foreseeable future. Our collective COVID experiences are changing our expectations and behaviours. We already see how this has changed restaurants. The restaurant of the future will need to be different and designed to address both the consumer and operator needs of the new environment. The restaurant of the future will be innovative and exciting.” (What the Restaurant of the Future Will Look Like After COVID-19, HAND & REINSTEIN 2020).

One of the best examples of these restaurants of the future is XCafe, the first fully robotic restaurant located in the city of Tianjin, China. Everything from ordering, preparing, cooking, plating to serving is controlled by robots and artificial intelligence. (First Fully Automated Robot Restaurant, Lee 2018). But this is an extreme case, in this report, the author is going to focus on how to make the most of Industry 4.0 in the restaurant and adapt it to also face with the problems caused by the pandemic.

It will not only be important to start automating restaurant processes due to covid19 but it will also be important to implement these digital solutions to increase management efficiency and reduce costs. (From Industry 4.0 to Tourism 4.0, Saša Zupan). According to a survey conducted by V. Verevka, customers' desire to pay bills with their mobile phones is growing faster and faster. (Development of Industry 4.0 in the Hotel and Restaurant Business, Tatiana Verevka 2019, 7–8).

The restaurants of the future will obviously be different, as they will have to adjust to the demands of covid19 in order to satisfy consumers. With new security measures, social distancing, and the fear of infection, we will see new changes in both establishments and consumers themselves. Establishments will change the typical dining room layout and will add no-touch ordering and no-touch payment systems. These systems have advantages for both customers and owners. The customer does most of the work in ordering and paying the bill (reducing the operator's workload and lines) but avoids touch points, orders the food when he wants it and without any pressure or possible mistakes, and the order goes directly

to the kitchen. New take-away options such as the drive-thru will also be established in traditional restaurants, giving great efficiency to the establishment. (What the Restaurant of the Future Will Look Like After COVID-19, HAND & REINSTEIN 2020).

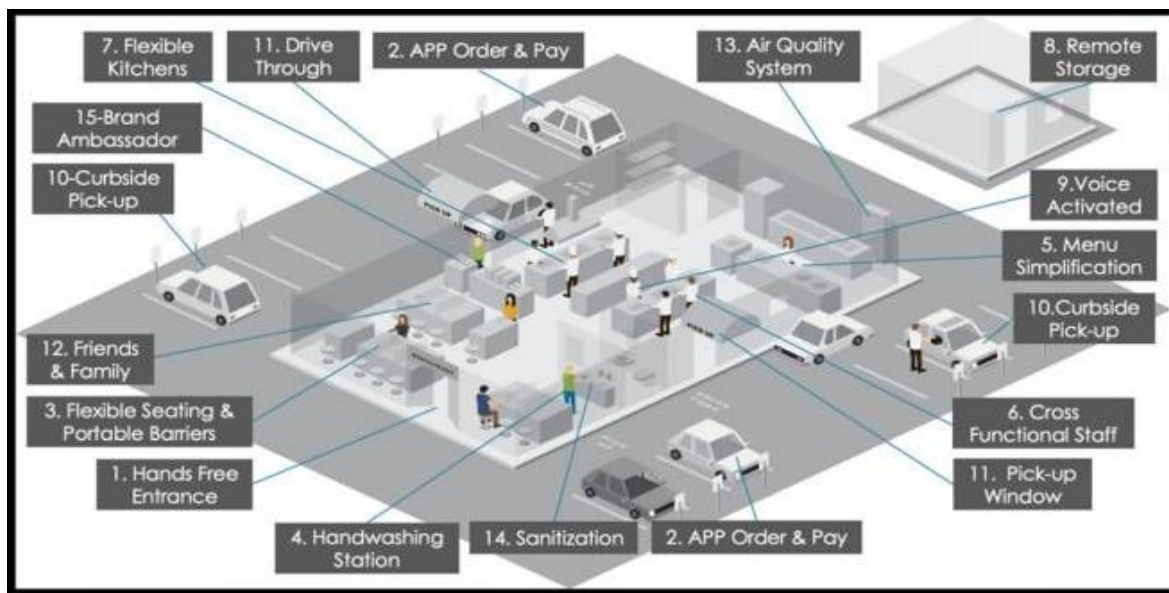


Figure 2. Restaurant adapted to new industry 4.0

Referring to Figure 2 attached to the text. It is possible to contemplate all the characteristics of a restaurant of the future, adapting to the new industry 4.0, which the author has commented on in point 2.5 and will continue commenting on the characteristics below.

According to the city of Lahti webpage, and as we can see in the Figure 3, the green European city is arranging new five-minute short-term parking spaces in the downtown area to make it easier to search for takeaway food. The measure responds to a future emergency where restaurants close, but it is possible to sell pick-ups. Currently, the city center has free short-term 5 or 15 minute parking at 11 different points for a total of 26 squares. Due to the current exceptional situation, it has been considered necessary to streamline the sale of food portions by restaurants by adding 5-minute p-seats to the center in 3 different points. There are a total of 5 boxes to add. Parking in the squares is within a time limit and there is no need to use a parking disc in these squares. Short-term parking will be implemented with temporary traffic signs and the goal is for the installation to be completed by Monday, March 8, 2021. (Pick-up food is facilitated by short-term parking, Lahti.fi 2021).

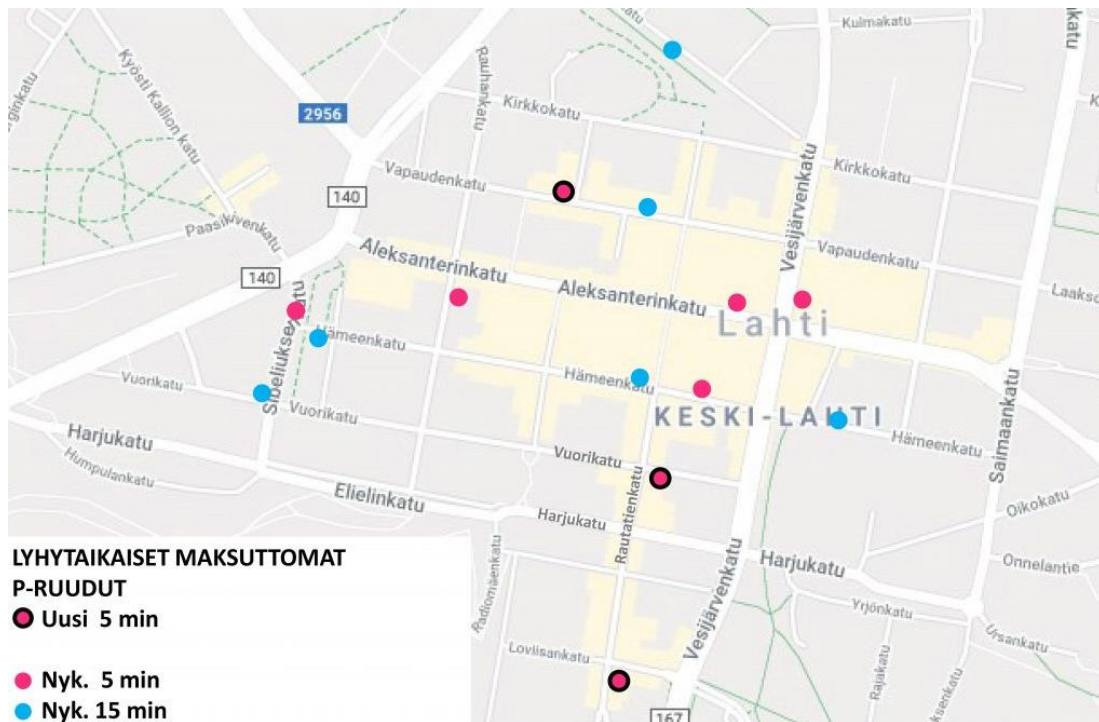


Figure 3. Lahti map with pick-up points

The new restaurants of the future and to combat the pandemic will have to be hands-free everything for the safety (but also the demand and possible obligation) of the consumer and worker. Hands free could be the doors, hand washing, toilets, lights and menu ordering among others. The restaurant should also have folding tables and chairs that can be easily moved to accommodate the number of customers at the time as we move away from the typical restaurant layout patterns. (What the Restaurant of the Future Will Look Like After COVID-19, HAND & REINSTEIN 2020).

According to Bruce Reinstein and Tim Hand is very important that owners of the restaurants start adapting their restaurants as soon as possible, so in the future, can exceed customer expectation, drive projected revenue, and keep all costs in line. The new restaurants and the ones that are going to adapt to covid19 requirements will need to work with technology to make the customer experience safer, faster and efficient. Restaurants will need to improve or set an APP to pay and order the meals from anywhere. (What the Restaurant of the Future Will Look Like After COVID-19, HAND & REINSTEIN 2020).

Curbside pickup is the next big thing when talking about the restaurants of the future. For all types of restaurants, from fast food to traditional restaurants, the curbside pickup option has gained popularity for a long list of reasons. For security, as the customer picks it up themselves, without having to pass through someone else's hands, someone else's vehicle and the uncertainty of it being opened. Curbside is the best no-touch option available due to you pay in advance, stay in the car and pick up from the window. Better quality, as the

food doesn't go around the city like the delivery we are used to. It will gain popularity because it is easy to adapt to most restaurants. Increased profitability for the operators as the customer does part of the work, there are no delivery costs and it has been studied that when consumers order online, they spend more money as there is no pressure around them. So it proves to be a great option for new entrepreneurs in the sector, but also for traditional restaurants to adapt to it. (What the Restaurant of the Future Will Look Like After COVID-19, HAND & REINSTEIN 2020).

### **3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Research context and informants**

##### **The Lahti Region**

To put the reader in context, this research is focused on the city of Lahti, with 40 districts at its feet, located in and being the capital of Päijät-Häme, in the south of the country. It is 100km away from the capital, Helsinki. It is really well connected to other major cities such as Jyväskylä, Tampere and Kouvola. The population of Lahti is 120.112. Today, Lahti is one of Finland's main economic centres. In terms of transport, there are 20 buses connecting all urban districts within 10-20 minutes. It also has a good rail connection to the whole country. (Wikipedia, 2021.) The modern city in southern Finland, as the author commented in the introduction, offers optimal conditions for entrepreneurs. It attracts visitors from all over the world with more than 200 sporting events that are repeated year after year, as important as the Lahti Ski Games or the winter sports world championships, as well as major cultural events. (Lahti my city 2019).

And when it comes to restaurants, the city of Lahti is made up of 46 restaurants offering food to its citizens. With a wide range of tastes and experiences. Restaurants with innovative or traditional ideas. And of many different gastronomic cultures, such as Mexican, Nepalese, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, among the most abundant. (Visit Lahti, Restaurants in the Lahti region 2021).

##### **Informants**

The first interview was carried out with a Mexican entrepreneur living in Lahti. Owner of a Mexican restaurant in the city of Lahti. In order to compare the restaurant sector between Spain and Finland, apart from Finnish restaurants, three other restaurants in Spain were also interviewed. The first restaurant to be interviewed was a traditional restaurant with 15 years on its back. The second restaurant interviewed was a new restaurant that is succeeding since it started its business with the curiosity that they opened during the covid19 pandemic. And the last restaurant interviewed from Spain, 4 years after opening, is an establishment in the city where the author comes from.

#### **3.2 Methods and phases of the study**

In order to clarify all the methods of analysis used by the author in this empirical section, a SWOT analysis has been carried out as a first study to obtain a precise diagnosis which allows, on the basis of this, decisions to be taken in accordance with the objectives, as this



tool allows a picture of the current situation of the restaurant to be drawn up. Secondly, the survey was carried out as a market study aimed towards the restaurant's potential customers. The survey was sent through three groups on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram to reach as more potential customers as possible. And to conclude the research, interviews with Spanish and Finnish owners and entrepreneurs to compare both points of view.

In order to carry out a good market study, it is necessary to carry out its respective external analysis, where all the external factors that will help to better understand the environment in which the company operates are evaluated in an objective way. This type of study gives us the possibility of maximizing opportunities and minimizing market threats.

It can be an extremely difficult challenge for a restaurant to survive in a market where competition is increasing every year. Therefore, it is advisable to carry out a SWOT analysis to find out which aspects of the business need to be improved. In other words, a SWOT analysis, fulfils the function of analyzing the internal and external aspects of the establishment, i.e., it shows the weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities of the restaurant.

Carrying out a market study will help to analyse the supply and demand that the restaurant could have. In other words, it tries to find out whether or not the service offered can really satisfy the needs of the clients and in this way, it will give an idea of the acceptance it can have in the market.

At the same time, the market analysis helps to define the target or objective public to be addressed and therefore to determine what their unsatisfied needs or concerns are and helps to look for ways to satisfy them.

In the same way, a market study will provide us with a lot of valuable information to the point of being able to find a point of differentiation that will give us a sufficient advantage over our competitors.

This market study will be carried out by means of surveys with the general objective of finding out consumer habits, people's tastes, and their purchasing power.

Using the survey, the author pretends to find more information about the following points when talking about the potential customers of the restaurant:

- To find out how often customers go to restaurants.
- To identify what aspects, they consider when choosing a restaurant.
- Determine what type of food is most consumed.
- To determine the average amount spent in restaurants.

- To find out which social networks are the most used.

In order to gather all the necessary information, the author is going to carry out a market study using a survey, so quantitative research will be used in order to obtain empirical facts. The inhabitants of Lahti will be surveyed, as it will be the site of the opening of a restaurant.

#### Calculation of the sample size

In order to identify the size of the sample or the number of surveys needed to be carried out, the profile of the target customer we were addressing was considered, regardless of gender, since both men and women are potential markets for the restaurant. We obtain a population of 120.112 people, of which we are interested in those between 20 and 69 years old with a medium-high income, we get the final population of 74.638. (Statistics Finland's free statistical databases. Preliminary demographic data by region, 2021M01 \* -2021M03 \* Tilastokeskus 2021).

To determine the sample size, a confidence level of 95% was taken as a basis, which is equivalent to 1.96 and a margin of error of 5% in the sampling formula used.

Sample formula  $n = (Z^2pqN) / (Ne^2 + Z^2pq)$

Universe (N): 74.638

Confidence level (Z): 1.96

Margin of error (e): 0.05

Probability of occurrence (p): 0.5

Probability of non-occurrence (q): 0.5

$$n = (1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5) (74638) / ((74638) (0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5))$$

n= 383

#### Methodology

As mentioned above, given the objectives, the most appropriate methodology for conducting the market research is quantitative research, which is ideal for identifying trends, making predictions, and obtaining general results in large populations.

In order to carry out this methodology, a survey will be used to find out the preferences of potential customers.

### 3.3 Results

In this section, the author, shows and comment the SWOT analysis, then, the results of the interviews are transcribed and analysed. In the last part of this section, results of the survey are shown and analysed.

In order to carry out a good market study, it is necessary to carry out its respective external analysis, where all the external factors that will help to better understand the environment in which the company operates are evaluated in an objective way. This type of study gives us the possibility of maximizing opportunities and minimizing market threats.

It can be an extremely difficult challenge for a restaurant to survive in a market where competition is increasing every year. Therefore, it is advisable to carry out a SWOT analysis to find out which aspects of the business need to be improved. In other words, a SWOT analysis, fulfils the function of analyzing the internal and external aspects of the establishment, i.e., it shows the weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities of the restaurant.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good location in the center of Lahti.</li> <li>Quality of products.</li> <li>Good price-quality ratio.</li> <li>Diversity of products.</li> <li>New restaurant</li> <li>Affordable for everyone.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of experience of the owner/partners.</li> <li>New restaurant, not known in the market.</li> <li>Language barrier.</li> <li>Legislative obstacles due to COVID.</li> <li>Few suppliers and low bargaining power with them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little exploited restaurant model in Finland.</li> <li>Rise of tourism in the Lahti region.</li> <li>Customers looking for new experiences and sensations.</li> <li>Online commerce and take away or home delivery.</li> <li>Adoption of technological resources in the sector (4.0 industry).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition.</li> <li>COVID status, which creates economic, political, and social uncertainty.</li> <li>Poor control of the sector, which can lead to unfair competition.</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Continuous legislative changes in the hospitality sector.</li> </ul>

## Strengths

In the Lahti region, there is no doubt that establishing the restaurant minimally close to the center is a good option as can be seen in the other existing restaurants. There is no doubt that the quality of Spanish food together with the Mediterranean diet always offers high quality dishes and best of all, they can be offered at a good quality-price ratio that favors both the consumers and the restaurant itself. According to the survey, potential customers are firmly open and eager to get to know a new restaurant.

## Weaknesses

Due to minimal experience in the sector on the part of the author and opening a new restaurant in a foreign country, there is already a weakness, but also the fact of the language, as it will have to be adapted to the Finnish culture. COVID19 will not make things easy either. As a start-up, it is always difficult to find and negotiate with good suppliers, but it will be essential to bring the best taste of Spanish gastronomy to the Lahti region.

## Opportunities

To be able to open an exclusively Spanish restaurant in Lahti is a very good opportunity, as we could only find one restaurant that could come close to it. So, we don't have to worry about direct competition. It is also a great advantage that Lahti is working so hard to attract more tourism.

## Threats

The city of Lahti is full of restaurants, it is true that few of them are direct competitors, but it is a threat that there are so many restaurants and that is why there is a possibility of failure, especially in the beginning. COVID will accompany us throughout the whole process with the instability that comes with it and we will have to be prepared for all kinds of sudden changes. It is important that we can communicate in the end, as this will be essential when we are open to the consumer.

## Interviews

27-year-old entrepreneur, owner of a North American restaurant in the Lahti region. When he was 21 years old, he opened a restaurant in North America and now 27 years old, he lives in Lahti where he has opened his own restaurant during this pandemic period. He says that he has been involved in the restaurant industry practically all his life and his family has had several restaurants in North America for quite some time. He grew up as a child in restaurants with his father and soon started working in them. From waiter, unloading the goods, organising the shopping, cleaning... he has gone through all the roles that exist in a

restaurant and that has helped him nowadays as he knows each and every one of the problems that exist in each place and how to deal with them in the best way. He came to Lahti on family business and saw that there was more to do, talking about the restaurant business, here than in Helsinki since there was no competition at all. There was no one selling real tacos, which is his forte, so he decided to start in the Lahti region, because in other cities where his product was already being sold, he would have a lot more work to do to stand out and stand out from the rest of the restaurants. It was clear to the entrepreneur that with a good product and good marketing, even though he was the only one, he would be a sure success. This entrepreneur started by doing a very deep analysis of the market and knew that he first needed to make himself known and that is why he did not open the restaurant at first but started selling his product via takeaway in a small kitchen at home and developing a great marketing work via Instagram that was working very well to make himself known and to be able to better control his expenses so that they did not rise from the very beginning.

He explains in the interview that finding a place in Lahti where you can cook is very, very difficult, one of the most difficult tasks. He looked for and found a place with the real basics for cooking, with a smoke extractor (if you don't have one, it can become a very high variable expense, because imagine if you want to open your place on the ground floor of a building, you have to go up all the floors to the roof to get the smoke out) and space for the necessary appliances and plugs. Everything else was bought and paid by the owner of the restaurant. According to him it is not very important that it is fully equipped, because due to the lack of supply of establishments in Lahti, you cannot choose an establishment that is fully equipped, as there are none, and you have to settle for one that needs more renovation. The location of the restaurant in Lahti is not at all important if the product you offer is at least minimally good and your customers like it, they will look for you under the rocks. In order to meet the requirements before opening the restaurant, he himself searched the internet for everything necessary and says that in Finland you can do it yourself, but you can also hire external help to speed up and facilitate the process as many other restaurants do.

When hiring staff, they like to do face-to-face interviews. In Finland, as in other countries, you are paid by the hour, and you must take into account the extra pay on Sundays and the extra pay after 7 p.m., which goes up by 20%. If someone has 5 years of experience, they should also get a pay rise, and he says that many restaurant owners play on these details to minimise costs.

His restaurant started in the middle of the pandemic, as I mentioned before, they started the business from their kitchen, hoping to wait a year before opening a physical restaurant.

But they realised that they had to open the restaurant very soon because they were overwhelmed with so many orders and the demand from people asking them to open a restaurant. The government didn't give them any help, but that was because they didn't ask for it. If they did ask for it, they were aware that they would get it, but there was a lot of bureaucracy involved and they didn't want to get involved.

The use of technology in the restaurant seems to him to be an excellent idea, but it is something that must be very well worked out in order to make it work in the restaurant. The owner of the establishment says that it is a vital thing and that it should be standardised in the restaurant world. He does not know how restaurants in the Helsinki area or other parts of Finland do it, but he thinks it is very similar to Lahti and they are not ready to make this technological change, which sounds very nice, but the reality is that you have to take into account the learning curve, learn about it and that people who are not used to this kind of technology, which is not easy, get used to it and it is a time that you also have to estimate. He agrees completely but it's not as easy as it sounds. To deal with the pandemic, she thinks the use of technology is a good idea, but she doesn't think it is the solution. He didn't want to get too much into the subject but sometimes the government tells incoherent things like they can be very crowded on the terraces, but they can't sit inside the restaurant.

According to this owner, the most important thing for a business, in terms of finances, are the fixed costs. He says it is good to have a cushion as they say in his country, a "guardad-ito" of fixed expenses, such as for staff, rent, electricity, water and all the fixed expenses so that you don't have to worry for as long as possible. So that you don't have to sell thinking that you have to pay more expenses but sell and keep the money because you know that you already have it saved. He says that of course he has had problems, but he has been able to overcome them. He has been able to get investors and loans easily from the very beginning.

The risks, he says, are always the same, whether in Finland, North America, or Spain. The restaurant industry is very demanding and tiring. For example, when there are customers who want to stay longer one day in the evening, if you are not in the restaurant, your workers will throw them out, but if you are there, you are sure to let them stay longer and keep consuming. You never know what time you are going to finish, repeat that it is very demanding and tiring. Another risk is to be able to control the variable expenses, because one weekend the stars align or there was a football match or whatever and the restaurant is full and you sell everything and more, then the next weekend you prepare the same thing and the people don't come, you don't sell, and the food goes to waste.

When asked if they have any kind of promotion such as coupons, he replied that no, they do not have coupons at the moment, but he says that it does work, and it is known as customer loyalty. For example, if you eat 10 times in the restaurant, you get free tacos or a meal or any other prize. That makes customers become loyal to the brand, to the restaurant and they prefer to eat there rather than go to another restaurant. But just like everything else, you have to prepare everything well, all the logistics and if you pull it off, you must be 100% sure that nobody will try to scam you and you have it perfectly controlled, but this strategy works very well.

The first interviewee from Spain has been in the restaurant business since 1996, when he started catering school and worked in several restaurants before opening his own restaurant, which he opened in March 2015 and is now chef and owner. The chef would not choose any other country to open his restaurant for reasons of esteem for his country, Catalonia, and his village, Cambrils. His parents bought the restaurant, many years ago, before he started running it. When he decided to start, they had to do a lot of renovations to adapt it to the requirements of the times and he says that he did not receive any help from the state or the government. The owner believes that if it is possible, it is always better to buy a restaurant that is prepared so as not to have to do a lot of renovations, simply because of the high cost.

He says that they have not done anything special to attract new customers, they have not done any kind of promotion, advertising or similar. They have simply focused on offering their best cuisine to their customers and these have become loyal over time because they liked what they offered. He believes that in this aspect they do not differ from how they do it in other countries. To adapt to the pandemic, the restaurant has followed the indications of the health system in his country. They have removed tables to reduce the capacity. They have carried out all the cleaning with disinfectant alcohol, gel for the customers and masks for everyone. To combat the pandemic, the government has helped very little, as they have received 11,000 euros in aid for the whole year, which, compared to the 200,000 euros they bill annually, is, in their opinion, not much help. He says that, in Spain, the government has given very little help to deal with the crisis<sup>19</sup> which has hit the restaurant sector hard, and that the large restaurants have suffered much more from this crisis as they have received very little aid in comparison to their cash flow. In reference to the criteria for recruitment and selection of staff, in their case, what they do is ask for CVs, do a short interview if they like the CV and give them a trial weekend to show whether they can work in the restaurant or not. In the best-case scenario, they keep it and if not, they continue with the same pattern until they find the right one. The restaurant owner is not a great lover of technology. He only has a data phone for contactless payment and a computer for the billing programme. He

says that with touch tablets or mobile phones to make orders and/or pay, in the end, more time is wasted than doing it the traditional way with pen and paper, according to his experience. He believes that the use of technology to cope with the pandemic is not very important, they have tried, for example, the use of QR codes to see the menu from a mobile phone, but most of their customers prefer to have the menu in hand. With a good disinfection of the menus, there is no problem, and it is more practical for them.

In reference to the financial issue, this restaurant says that the most important thing is to know the cost of each dish and the price at which you are going to sell it. Or, in the case of a restaurant with daily menus, to adapt the prices in order to, obviously, make a profit. They have never had any financial problems, as they have always organised their savings well and have never stopped serving in the restaurant or making take-away meals in order to continue earning incomes. He concludes the interview by talking about the problems of opening a restaurant in Spain, the main one is that there are so many restaurants, and therefore so much competition. He also comments that in Spain, entrepreneurs who do not know what to do, decide to open a restaurant, having very little knowledge of the sector, without knowing how to organise themselves financially or with very few culinary qualities, and all of this leads them to have to close the restaurant.

The following interviewees have been in the sector for ten years and only 10 months with their new restaurant in Spain. They have opened in the middle of the pandemic. They surprised the author when, to the second question, they answered that if they would choose another country to open their restaurant, they would choose the Maldives, a country in South Asia, to carry out their business. They would go there because, according to them, the people who live in the Maldives love the Spanish gastronomy, of which the famous Paella stands out. They had to do a lot of renovations when they bought the restaurant, they tore down the whole kitchen to build it from scratch and renovated the whole dining room. They say that it is always better not to have to renovate, but they believe that you should not choose a restaurant based on whether or not you need to renovate, as they give priority to other aspects such as location. For example, they prefer to have to carry out renovations and to be able to choose a better location, as they say that in the long term it is better for the restaurant and the costs of the renovations are amortised. They did receive external help to be able to open the restaurant with all the permits in order. A company from Barcelona helped them a lot to follow all the guidelines and they recommend it so that everything goes well and the business works. The key to attract new customers has been to improve, innovate and change in all aspects. As far as customer loyalty is concerned, they say that it is very different to have had the restaurant for only 10 months, compared to others who have had it for more years, and they believe that they have not yet taken any steps in this



area. They believe that it does make a difference when it comes to loyalty or attracting new customers, the fact of being in Spain, as it is a country of customs and potential customers tend to go to the same restaurants with their family and friends. According to them, the hiring criteria depend a lot on each restaurateur. They have opted for a young and efficient team. In reference to the question of how they have adapted to the pandemic, they do not know what it was like to work before the pandemic because they opened the restaurant in the summer, in the middle of the pandemic, as they had planned it and did not back out. Like the other restaurants, they received minimal government aid, but it has not been significant. They have had to keep paying and working to keep going. Regarding the use of technology in the restaurant business, they believe that it is important for the coming generations, but in their case, they still have to keep the traditional tools as most of their customers are not prone to use technology when they eat out and are not used to it. They believe that it is a good option to cope with the covid19, they have done very well with the use of QR codes to avoid having to use traditional menu boards and each customer used their mobile phone. Talking about finances, they believe that it is very important to have a good financial manager who guides you in all economic aspects, both when buying and selling. They have not suffered any financial problems as they have managed orders, bills and staff well. They comment that, in Spain, the government gives little or no help to entrepreneurs who want to open a restaurant and charges a lot of taxes. The banks do not make things easy when it comes to giving loans at the beginning either. But they do not know if in other countries it is just as complicated or if the governments give more help to entrepreneurs like them.

The last interviewee from Spain has been in the hotel business for 26 years and has had his own restaurant for 4 years. It has not crossed his mind to open the business in another country, mainly because he is already well established in his city. He did have to condition the premises in order to be able to start operating, because when he bought it, it was a kind of tavern where only cold dishes were served and no freshly cooked food was offered, as there was no kitchen. He asked for but did not receive any support from the state. In order to attract new customers, he has done nothing but to treat all his customers well. He prepares every meal very well and spends a lot of time preparing delicious dishes that make people want to come back. What he values, when it comes to hiring new staff, is the way they deal with customers and the desire to work with a team, he says that this is the most basic thing they should have and he gives it more importance than to experience, as over time they will gain experience in the same restaurant, but not the desire and the way they deal with customers. With a lot of effort, he has been able to adapt to this pandemic. He has received aids to deal with the covid19, for being self-employed, and other aids to be

able to pay the workers. He believes that new technologies are very important in restaurants nowadays, as most restaurants are modernising and adapting, and you can't do nothing if you don't want to lose some of your customers. He does give importance to technology in these times of covid19 and to be able to somehow stop the infections and be able to return to normality as soon as possible. In order not to have economic problems, he says that one must have good administration, know how to buy and sell at the right price. Treat the product well and conserve it as much as possible so as not to have to throw anything away. One of the biggest risks of opening a restaurant in Spain, he says, is that you receive very little help to get the business off the ground and that if you don't manage to build customer loyalty by doing things well, you can practically run out of customers and be forced to close the premises.

In this section the author has shared the results of the survey.

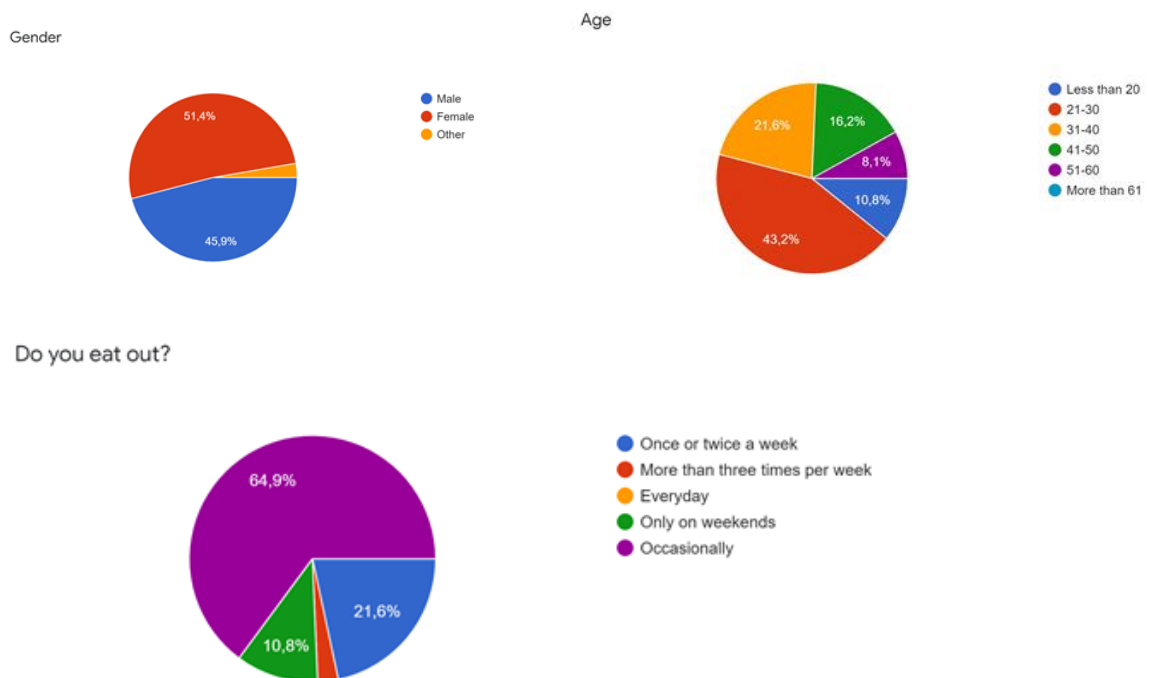


Figure 4. Survey questions

In the previous, basic questions, with which we started the survey, we observed that practically the same number of women and men responded. As expected, 43.2% were between 21 and 30 years of age, but we were able to obtain responses from older people, which was one of the most difficult tasks, as it is usually more complicated to reach them. A large majority of potential customers go out to eat 64.9% occasionally, followed by 21.6% who go out eleven or twice a week and followed by people who only go out at weekends. So far, so good and normal.

Overall satisfaction with the restaurants in Lahti.

70 respuestas

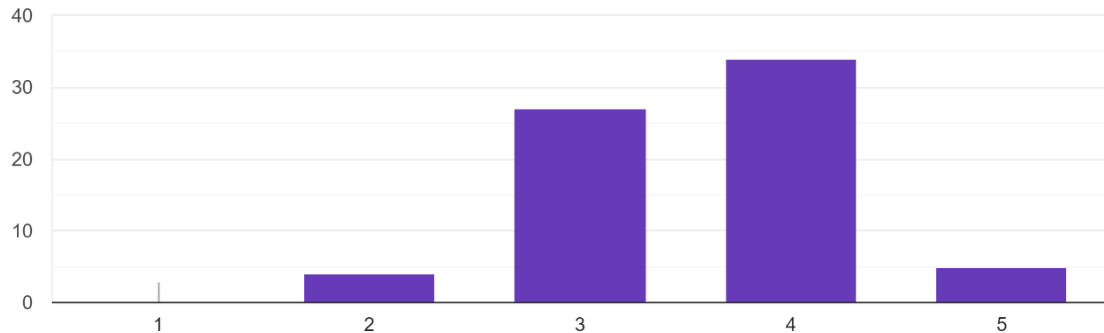


Figure 5. Overall satisfaction with the restaurant in Lahti

In general, potential customers are happy with the restaurants that the city has to offer, but it is surprising that only 7.1% of the respondents answered that they are satisfied to the maximum, and most of them gave a 3 or 4, reflecting the fact that there is still a lack of restaurants for consumers to have a reason for maximum satisfaction. When we asked them if they could answer why they were satisfied, we had very satisfactory answers, which are attached below:

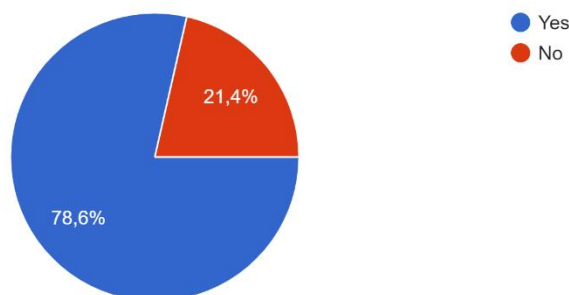
“Lahti offers a wide range of different restaurants all over town, most in the city centre. You can find all kinds of things you prefer”. “Most restaurants are too expensive for their quality. There could be more Street food places”. “You can find multiple different cuisines, most of the restaurants have vegetarian options, customer service is usually good, and I have found the places I like to visit, consider good and like to take my guests to eat as well during the time I have lived here in Lahti”. “Previously, the restaurants tended to be all average, buffet type or "school cafeteria" type. Recently, more "cosy" or "luxurious" restaurants have opened as well (Kaarlo, Coppa, Popot)”. “A lot of the fast-food places (pizza, kebab) are bad. There are exceptions such as Hesburger, Konnichiwa, etc. Overall price is high however.” “Mostly bars and cafes and a few restaurants but nothing to grab my attention. Mostly, fast food. I prefer good cuisine. A nice Italian or some tapas bars would be cool to add an authentic experience.” “Till now I was always very happy with the quality of food, I just wish there were more variety of different restaurants then it would be perfect”.

The answers above are the most prominent of all respondents. We can see that many comments reflect the great diversity of restaurants in the city and this favours new entrepreneurs

wanting to open a new restaurant, as the city is open to new restaurants and types of cuisine. Apart from the above, there are also many comments indicating that they are not happy with the price of the current restaurants.

Are you a takeaway customer?

70 respuestas



Do you mostly get it delivered to your home or do you pick it up yourself?

55 respuestas

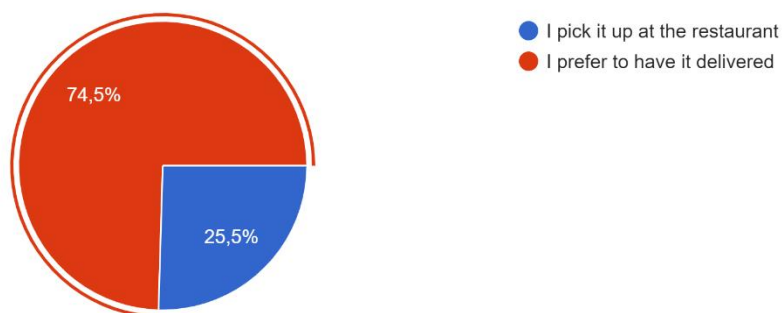


Figure 6. Survey questions about delivery

When asked whether consumers would opt for takeaway, the majority said yes, with almost 80% of the responses, and of these, 75% prefer to have it delivered to their home and 25% prefer to pick it up at the restaurant. There is no doubt that, according to the respondents, delivery or takeaway has to be implemented in all new restaurants opening in the city of Lahti.

Of your five favorite restaurants in Lahti, how many have a takeaway service?

55 respuestas

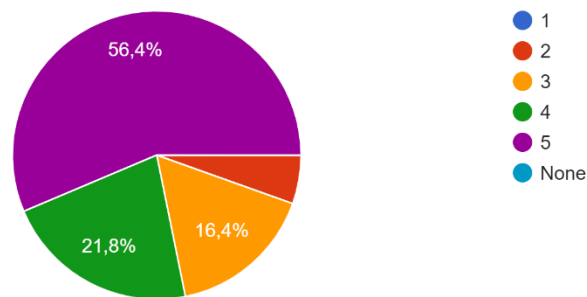


Figure 7. Survey questions about takeaway

Respondents were asked how many of their 5 favourite restaurants in the city of Lahti home delivery service and they had said, with almost 60%, that all 5 had home delivery service. Foodora and Wolt dominate the market as we saw in the survey as all respondents said that both delivery companies were present in all restaurants.

Do you order more online because of the pandemic?

55 respuestas

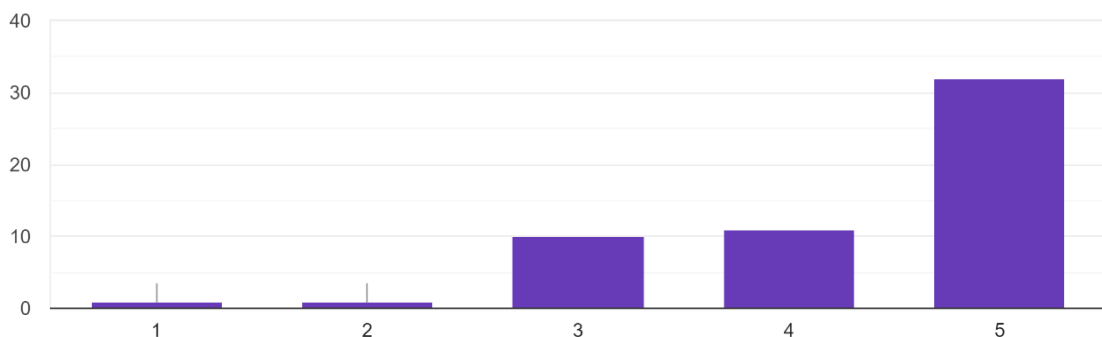


Figure 8. Survey question about the relation of ordering online and the pandemic.

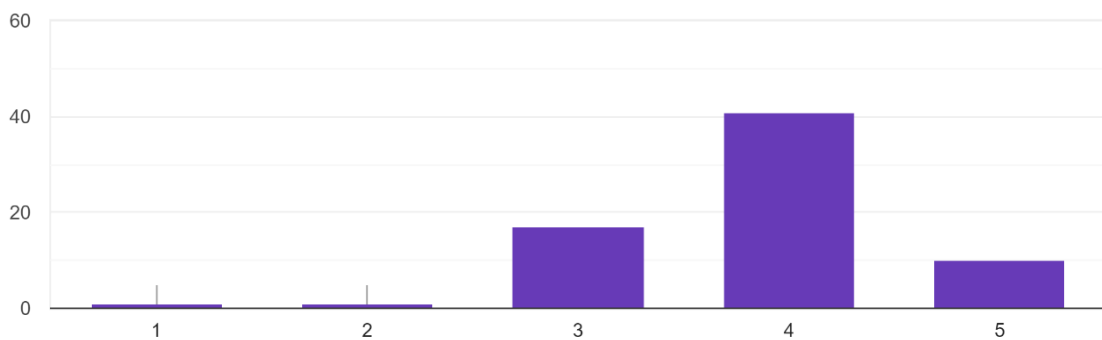
When asked whether people were ordering more online due to the pandemic, 60% said yes and this is something the author is not surprised about, as he expected it. 61% believe that digitalization is necessary in the catering sector in Lahti. The survey also asked why they thought digitalization was necessary and the answers were as follows:

“More information about the food, how they cook it, what is inside, where the products come from etc”. “ ordering devices (like the ones in burger king or McDonalds), makes ordering easier and faster.” “ Clear categories of different types of dishes, good selection from the

restaurant's menu , descriptions of what the dish will contain and fair working environment for the delivery staff.” “ Delivery tracking, communication with driver, flexibility of order”. “ Easy to use, quantifiable, optimised for mobile and computers, clear and transparent language, Finnish-English inclusive of use of Spanish if that restaurant is of Spanish cuisine. Adds to the authenticity. Quick order system. Allow for extra details. The addition of live tracking on deliveries is super effective for customer satisfaction.” “ More info about restaurant, products etc, photos of the menu.” “Foodora and wolt are very well organised in Lahti”

How often do you usually go to the same restaurant?

70 respuestas



Level of willingness to go to a new restaurant?

70 respuestas

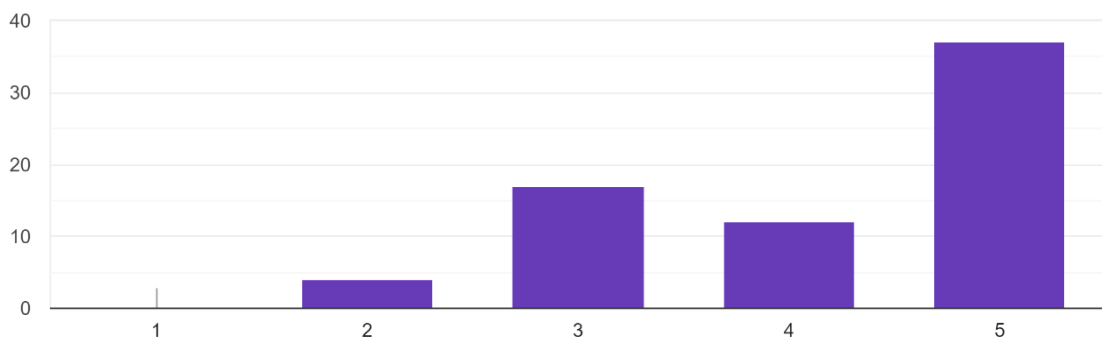


Figure 9. Survey questions

The majority of potential customers are likely to go to the same restaurant every time, which is logical, but luckily, consumers' willingness of going to a new restaurant is high, with more than 50% of respondents.

When deciding where to go out to eat, what aspects influence your choice? (Please tick between the options:

70 respuestas

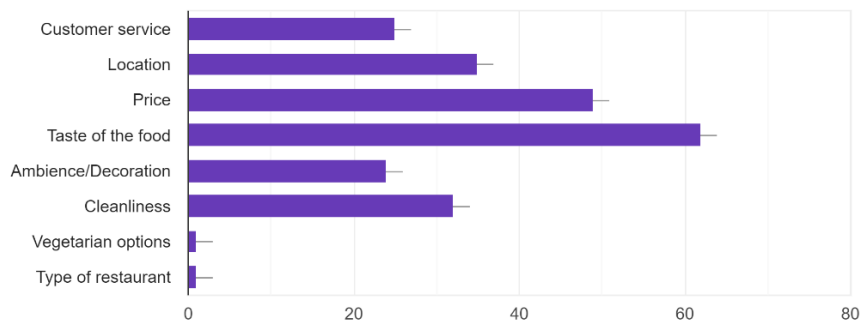


Figure 10. Aspects that influence customers choice when going out

According to the survey, what influences potential customers the most is the taste of the food with 88.8%, followed by price, location, cleanliness, customer service and ambience or decoration in last place. One respondent added that he was also influenced if the restaurant offered vegetarian options.

How much do you spend in these restaurants?

70 respuestas

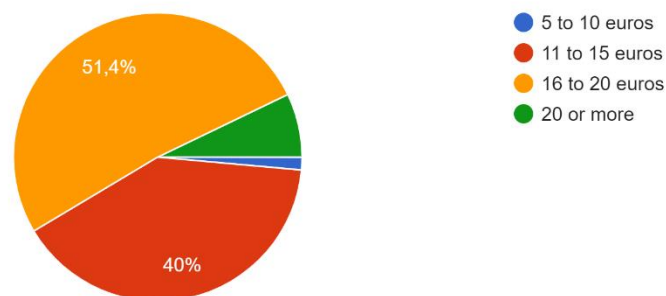


Figure 11. Survey question

There is no doubt that the price range for a restaurant, according to those surveyed, would be between 11 and 20 euros, as the responses indicate with overwhelming clarity.

What type of food do you prefer? You can mark as many as you want.

70 respuestas

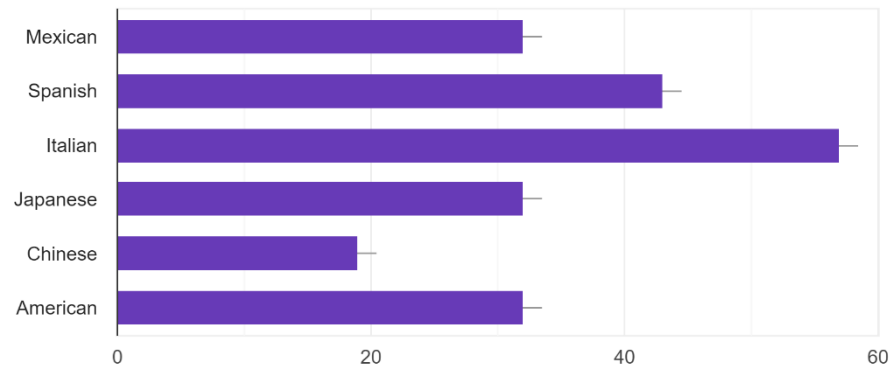


Figure 12. Food preferences

Italian food is still booming in any country, and the author's respondents were no less and 81% prefer Italian food, but more than 60% would also like to see a Spanish food restaurant in the southern region of Finland. Mexican, Japanese and American types of food are also among the tastes of potential customers, followed by Chinese food in last place. These statistics favour a Spanish food restaurant, as Lahti already offers Italian, Mexican, Japanese and American food, but not Spanish food.

Do you care about where the food offered by each restaurant comes from?

70 respuestas

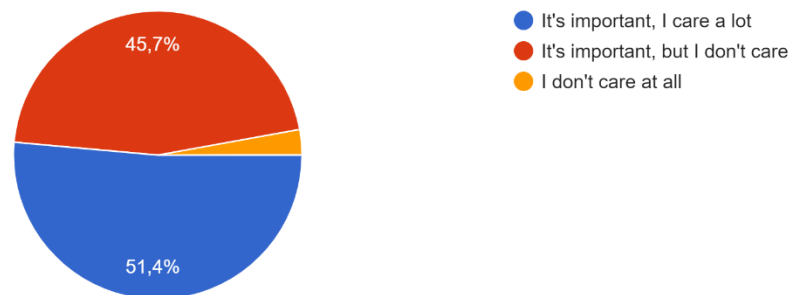
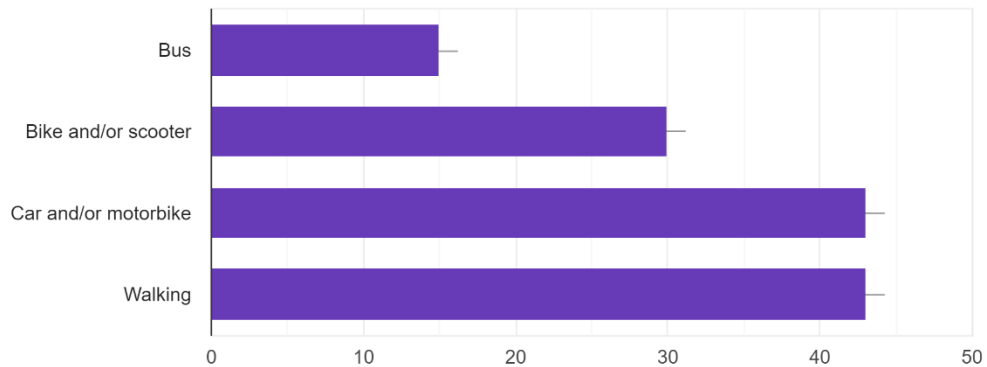


Figure 13. Survey question



How do you usually travel to the restaurant?

70 respuestas



Which social networks do you use the most to interact with restaurants?

70 respuestas

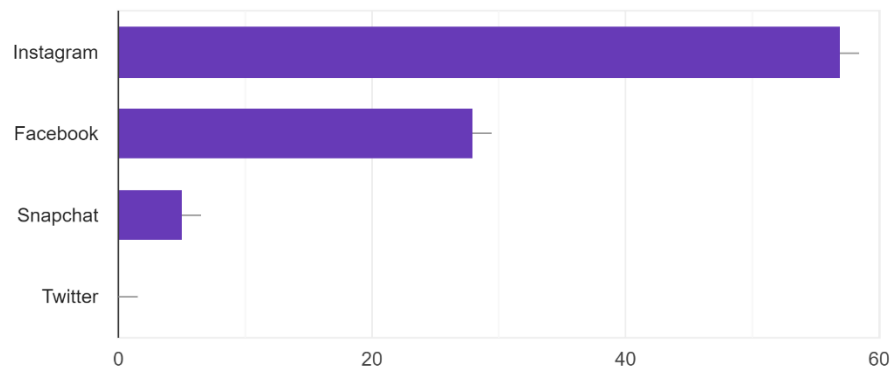


Figure 14. Survey questions

We asked, if they had any other comments that they would like to share and here are the most interesting ones regarding what they would like to see in a new restaurant in Lahti:

“The recipe to make the same food at home!”. “Better hourly pay for the employees”. “ Sense of clear branding and character.”. “ Cleanliness is most important, nice welcoming staff. Ignorance is the biggest downfall of many restaurants. Clean, easy to follow menu and good relaxing ambient lighting in seating areas. You want the customer to feel at home and the longer they stay in the restaurant, the more money they spend.”

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Discussion of the results

According to the objectives I had at the beginning of this project I think they have been fulfilled as one of the main objectives was to provide as much information as possible on how to start a restaurant in the Lahti region. How to adapt the Spanish cuisine to the Finnish restaurant world and differentiate from the rest of the restaurants, and I also wanted to get into Industry 4.0, since this year the covid19 had hit the restaurant sector hard and I think that a research had to be done in order to solve the problems that this pandemic has caused, causes and will cause in the short term future. I also wanted to demonstrate the differences between opening a restaurant in Spain or in Finland, taking advantage of my nationality and being here in Finland, this year as an Erasmus student, to interview restaurant owners from both countries and make both points of view known.

As can be seen in the literature review, Spanish cuisine is one of the most well-recognized worldwide, combined with the city of Lahti, which is making optimal decisions for entrepreneurs, getting involved in these times of pandemic to help the restaurant sector makes a very good combination to start a restaurant here. Thanks to Kespro's study, we can see that Finland still has a lot to offer in the restaurant world and is developing rapidly, both in terms of demand and supply, adapting to the needs of consumers.

When opening a restaurant, it is necessary to know the basic premises that must be developed in the establishment and this is what we did in section 2.3, where each and every one of the steps that must be taken into account before opening a restaurant are detailed. In order not to increase the costs of starting a restaurant and not to require the help of an inspector, in this section 2.3, we have detailed all the necessities that need to be taken into account before the restaurant can be opened to the public. In this thesis we also talk about the value proposition, specifically in point 2.4 but also throughout the whole work, because if the reader follows all the points from the literature review to the empirical research, he can form his own value proposition for his restaurant in case the entrepreneur wants to open a restaurant himself, because in connection with the industry 4.0 can also give the restaurant more characteristics that from what we have observed in Lahti are not reflected in the current restaurants, since Industry 4.0 is a very new term in the restaurant sector and in section 5 of the literature review, we have developed and explained it so that, if necessary it can be applied to any restaurant.

During this thesis the author has realised the importance of adapting the restaurant to Industry 4.0 and even more so in these pandemic times. As more and more information was

found and contrasted he realised how important it was to know what a restaurant of the future was and how to adapt it in the city of Lahti where all these concepts are not present and minimally known.

#### 4.2 Answers to research questions

Before starting the interviews and the survey, the author carried out a SWOT analysis in order to, as the name suggests, find out the strengths and opportunities, weaknesses, and threats, and from there to develop the questions that were going to be asked in the interviews or the questions that were going to appear in the survey for the restaurant's potential customers. The strengths of opening a Spanish restaurant here in Lahti were the quality of the products that always go hand in hand with Spanish cuisine, the diversity of products that can be offered in a Spanish restaurant and the good value for money that can be offered to the client and thus be affordable for the majority. In addition, the fact that it was a new restaurant in the city also strengthened the other characteristics as we observed in the survey. But above all, being able to open an exclusively Spanish restaurant in the city of Lahti was a great opportunity as we could only find one that could be a direct competitor.

The interviews were really useful, both for the author and for all the readers of this thesis who are interested in opening a restaurant in Finland or have the idea of internationalising their restaurant. Everybody can draw their own conclusions from them, (they are not 100% verified sources like the literature review) as none of them will be better or worse than the others. But the conclusions drawn by the author are that the more years they have been in the restaurant business, the more reluctant restaurants seem to be to change and prefer to operate their restaurant in the traditional way, while new restaurants, curiously, opened during the covid19, are prone to change and adapt to industry 4.0 as we saw in the literature review. That it is always better to be able to acquire a restaurant with the premises ready to operate, but that this should not put you off or give you more importance than the location of the establishment as in the long run, according to the interviewees, it is more profitable. That the key to attracting new customers, as we explained during the report, is to have a well-developed value proposition and to stick to it. And that opening a restaurant in Spain, according to the interviewees, is more complicated due to the high level of competition. As the thesis has been focused on being a roadmap for future entrepreneurs, those more interested can read the interviews and draw other conclusions regarding the risks of opening a restaurant, the most common hiring criteria in both countries, the help that restaurant owners have received during this pandemic crisis or their thoughts about covid19 and technology.

### 4.3 Reliability and validity of the study

The resources used in this report are reliable and valid when we talk about the literature review part. The author tried to use the most up-to-date references from the internet, containing, books, google-scholar documents, professional magazines, and other material from trusted websites from the Finnish government or important food authorities.

According to Whittemore, reliability in qualitative research refers to the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets. It can be enhanced by detailed field notes by using recording devices and by transcribing the digital files. However, validity in qualitative research might have different terms than in quantitative research. (Whittemore 2001)

As regards the interviews, they were prepared according to the material found during the theory basis and in order to be able to develop the thesis from another point of view closer to the world of restoration. The interviews were conducted by mail and one-to-one video calls. The identity of the interviewees could not be revealed. The interviews with the Spanish restaurants were conducted in the author's mother tongue, and with the Finnish restaurant, in English. The interviews were subsequently transcribed by the author for this study. The surveys were conducted via Google surveys, one of the most efficient methods. The questions were prepared with the author's knowledge acquired during the thesis and were sent to three Facebook groups in Lahti (more than ten thousand followers all together), where there were potential customers and also via social networks to different age ranges with a great result as responses were obtained from all age ranges that were intended to collect information.

### 4.4 Recommendations for future research

This thesis makes clear the essential knowledge you need to know before opening a restaurant, especially in Finland. It also gives insight into everything you need to know to adapt your restaurant to Industry 4.0 and how to differentiate yourself from the competition. The interviews give interested readers a point of view closer to the point of view of restaurant owners in both Spain and Finland and thus help to get to know the restaurant world from their point of view.

For future studies, the author advises to interview more owners from Finland, although it is not an easy task, as interviews are very useful for this type of thesis. In reference to the survey, it is advised to reach more potential customers in order to have a larger sample and get more closer to real results.

## 5 SUMMARY

The thesis was mainly about how to open a restaurant as the main question indicates. It was true that the work had been leaning more towards becoming a road map for present and future entrepreneurs with similar intentions as the authors. The author started this thesis with the introduction of Spanish cuisine, Finnish cuisine and introducing Lahti, the ideal city to develop the whole project as it is an optimal city, as we have been commenting during the thesis, for entrepreneurs, thanks to all the events that the city hosts throughout the year, its location and the city's interest in continuing to evolve in the world of gastronomy.

The author's objectives were to demonstrate the feasibility of opening a typical Spanish restaurant in the southern region of the country. So, the main goal would be to provide as much information as possible in order to start a Spanish restaurant in the city. How to adapt Spanish cuisine to the Nordic country and how to differentiate from other restaurants. In addition, considerable importance has been given to this global pandemic in which the restaurant sector has been one of the most affected and the author has wanted to acquire sufficient knowledge to be able to develop the idea of taking a restaurant towards industry 4.0 to solve the problems that COVID-19 has caused and will cause in this sector of the restaurant industry. Through interviews, he also wanted to demonstrate the differences between opening a restaurant in Spain and in Finland.

The author also wanted to make it clear that this work excludes the part of carrying out a business plan as it did not fit in this type of thesis and would require much more research time. The author has relied on academic articles, professional journals, digital books or other research papers from Google scholar to acquire the necessary knowledge to carry out the thesis.

As far as the qualitative research is concerned, the author obtained information from 4 interviews with owners and entrepreneurs from the restaurant sector in Finland and Spain in order to demonstrate to the interested reader, the problems of opening a restaurant in the different countries, and the advantages or the way of working of each of the owners. To complement this empirical part of the thesis, the author carried out a survey that was sent to 3 Facebook groups with more than 10000 potential consumers, in order to know their point of view and to see the results in order to extract the pertinent conclusions. The survey was also sent to WhatsApp groups to be able to reach other age ranges and thus gather an even more real sample. Before the survey and the interviews, a SWOT analysis was carried out to find out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to be able to prepare the questions to be asked to the interviewees and the questions of the survey.

It is true that it is risky to open a business related to catering, but even more so nowadays with the current pandemic. However, the conclusions that have been reached, in relation to this aspect, is that more emphasis should be placed on home-delivered food, relying on the company Wolt and Foodora, in the case of Lahti, to get closer to customers. One of the problems of opening a business in the current pandemic situation is running a restaurant with the provisional regulations that change every week as dictated by the government. Based on the results of the survey, the restaurateur should not offer different prices between 11 and 20 euros, as this is the price range that potential customers were leaving in the restaurants in Lahti.

Finally, the results were discussed in the section 4, also the research results, both from the literature review and the empirical part, the reliability and validity of the work was clarified and recommendations for future research related to the topic of this thesis were given.

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Appendix 1. Interview with Finnish entrepreneurs and/or owners in the restaurant sector

1. How many years have you been in the restaurant business and how many years has your restaurant been operating here in Finland? Why did you choose Lahti to open your restaurant?
2. When you bought the restaurant, did you have to do a lot of renovations, or was the place already prepared? Do you think it is important to choose a well-prepared place? Have you received any help to be able to open the restaurant with all the permits in place?
3. What has been the key to attract new customers? And how did you achieve their loyalty? Do you think it is different in Finland? Why?
4. What are the criteria for recruitment and selection of staff here in Finland?
5. How have you adapted to the new pandemic? Have you received support from the government? What kind of support?
6. What do you think about the use of technology in the restaurant? (Mobile app for no-touch ordering and no-touch payment, for example.)
7. Do you think this technology is important to deal with covid? In which way?
8. Talking about finance, what are the most important aspects for a restaurant? Have you had any financial problems? If yes, how did you solve them?
9. What are the risks involved in starting a restaurant? Are there more or less risks in starting a restaurant in Finland than in other countries?
10. Do you offer any promotion like coupons in your restaurant? Does it work that kind of promotions?

## Appendix 2. Interview with Spanish entrepreneurs and/or owners in the restaurant sector

1. How many years have you been in the restaurant business and how many years has your restaurant been operating in Spain?
2. Would you choose any other country to open your restaurant? Why?
3. When you bought the restaurant, did you have to do a lot of renovations, or was the place already prepared? Do you think it is important to choose a well-prepared place? Have you received any help to be able to open the restaurant with all the permits in place?
4. What has been the key to attract new customers? And how did you achieve their loyalty? Do you think it is different in Spain? Why?
5. What are the criteria for recruitment and selection of staff in Spain?
6. How have you adapted to the new pandemic? Have you received support from the government? If yes, what kind of support?
7. What do you think about the use of technology in the restaurant? (Mobile app for no-touch ordering and no-touch payment, for example.)
8. Do you think this technology is important to deal with covid? In which way?
9. Talking about finance, what are the most important aspects for a restaurant? Have you had any financial problems? If yes, how did you solve them?
10. What are the risks involved in starting a restaurant? Are there more or less risks in starting a restaurant in Spain than in other countries?

## Survey: Opening a restaurant in the Lahti region

Dear participant,

I invite you to take part in this survey with the aim of gathering information that will help me to carry out my Final Thesis. Specifically, questions of author interest to complement the project will be asked. Only some of them are compulsory and are marked with an asterisk. This questionnaire is completely anonymous and under no circumstances can the person who completes it be identified. However, if for any reason you do not want to complete it or hand it in, you can stop taking it at any time.

The results of the thesis may be published. But it will be ensured that you will never be identified by your name, nor by any information that makes you identifiable.

However, in case of doubt, it is recommended that you request support through the following address: [aureli.cortada@student.lab.fi](mailto:aureli.cortada@student.lab.fi)

\*Obligatorio

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Having considered the information provided to me, I declare that my decision is as follows: \*

- I agree to participate voluntarily in this survey and consent to the anonymous processing of the data I provide. I understand that I can withdraw from the study and that in that case my data will not be saved.
- I refuse to participate in the survey

Gender \*

- Male
- Female
- Other

Age \*

- Less than 20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- More than 61

Do you eat out? \*

- Once or twice a week
- More than three times per week
- Everyday
- Only on weekends
- Occasionally

Overall satisfaction with the restaurants in Lahti. \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Minimum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maximum

---

Could you reason your previous answer?(Overall satisfaction with restaurants in Lahti)

Are you a takeaway customer? \*

- Yes
- No

Do you mostly get it delivered to your home or do you pick it up yourself? \*

- I pick it up at the restaurant
- I prefer to have it delivered

---

Of your five favorite restaurants in Lahti, how many have a takeaway service? \*

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- None

Do you know which of the following platforms are used by these 5 restaurants? \*

- Foodora
- Wolt

---

Do you order more online because of the pandemic? \*

- Less      1      2      3      4      5      More
-

Do you think digitalisation is necessary in Lahti's restaurant sector? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not very important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

---

In reference to the previous question. What would you like to find in a digitalised restaurant (e.g. being able to order food through an app)

Who do you usually go to restaurants with? \*

- Friends
- Colleagues from work and/or university
- Family members
- Affective partner

How often do you usually go to the same restaurant? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Minimum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maximum

---

Level of willingness to go to a new restaurant? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Minimum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maximum

When deciding where to go out to eat, what aspects influence your choice?  
(Please tick between the options: \*

- Customer service
  - Location
  - Price
  - Taste of the food
  - Ambience/Decoration
  - Cleanliness
  - Otro: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

How much do you spend in these restaurants? \*

- 5 to 10 euros
- 11 to 15 euros
- 16 to 20 euros
- 20 or more

What type of food do you prefer? You can mark as many as you want. \*

- Mexican
- Spanish
- Italian
- Japanese
- Chinese
- American



Do you care about where the food offered by each restaurant comes from? \*

- It's important, I care a lot
  - It's important, but I don't care
  - I don't care at all
- 

How do you usually travel to the restaurant? \*

- Bus
  - Bike and/or scooter
  - Car and/or motorbike
  - Walking
- 

Which social networks do you use the most to interact with restaurants? \*

- Instagram
  - Facebook
  - Snapchat
  - Twitter
- 

Any comments you have regarding what you would like to see in a restaurant, please let us know here: