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# Business plan for Japanese Food truck

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2017 Laurea



Laurea University of Applied Sciences

## Business plan for Japanese Food Truck

Thuy, Do & Thu, Truong  
Degree Programme in  
Restaurant Entrepreneurship  
Bachelor's Thesis  
February, 2017

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Year	2017	Pages	45 + 15
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In recent decades, enormous development of communication and transportation has enabled not only economic blossom but also cultural promotion. That allows people to have unique experiences that they never had before and one of which is multicultural cuisine. Similar effect was found with Japanese food in Finland, people tend to prefer this cuisine due to its delicate recipes and healthy ingredients. In the attempt to blend in this trend, the study aim is to produce a feasible business plan in establishing a food truck serving Okonomiyaki, the famous Japanese pancake, at the heart of Finland, capital Helsinki.

The authors have examined theoretical backgrounds of entrepreneurship, practical statistics and guidance for food truck startups in Finland, an overview of Japanese cuisine and fundamental business plan theory. In order to verify discussed literatures, qualitative research methodology was utilized. A pilot experiment was conducted at Restaurant Day to test customers' reaction to this new dish and their behaviors were recorded as observations. Also, an interview with one successful food truck startup in Helsinki was made to compare realistic experiences and hypothetical knowledge.

During the experiment, customers gave compellingly positive feedbacks about tastiness which established a strong evidence towards the potential of this business idea. The interviewed entrepreneur supported with useful information regarding her journey as well as experiences throughout the life her business. Based on those details, feasibility of this idea was confirmed and the authors constructed a detailed business plan for an Okonomiyaki food truck.

The result of this study can be used by any entrepreneurs who are passionate about running a small food and beverage business. To be more specific, it also benefits restaurateurs that are fond for serving food with great mobility. Besides, students in restaurant and hospitality major may attain useful information from it to proceed to further developments in their researches or expand this business plan to another dimension ranging from geographical to culinary aspects.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Japanese cuisine, Food truck, Business plan

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Entrepreneurship .....	2
2.1	Definition of entrepreneurship.....	2
2.2	The process of entrepreneurship .....	4
2.3	Hospitality entrepreneurship.....	6
2.3.1	Overview of hospitality industry .....	6
2.3.2	Restaurant entrepreneurship and its challenges.....	7
3	Start-up in Finland .....	9
3.1	Start-up environment.....	9
3.2	Legal aspect of establishing a company in Finland.....	11
3.3	Restaurant startup in Finland .....	12
3.3.1	Overview of startup environment in hospitality industry .....	12
3.3.2	The process of starting up a restaurant .....	13
3.4	Food truck start up in Finland.....	14
3.4.1	Development factors.....	15
3.4.2	SWOT analysis .....	16
4	Japanese cuisine .....	18
4.1	History of Japanese cuisine.....	18
4.2	Characteristics of Japanese cuisine.....	19
4.3	Okonomiyaki - a Japanese style pancake .....	20
5	Business plan theory .....	21
5.1	The importance of a business plan.....	21
5.2	Distributed factors of an effective business plan.....	22
5.3	Content of a basic business plan.....	23
6	Research methodology - Qualitative methods .....	24
6.1	Overview of qualitative research methodology .....	24
6.2	Interview method.....	25
6.2.1	Interview with Taiyaki Go.....	26
6.2.2	Interview analysis .....	27
6.3	Observation method .....	29
6.3.1	Practical implementation: Restaurant day .....	30
6.3.2	Restaurant day .....	34
7	Daruma food truck's business plan.....	36
8	Conclusion and discussion .....	37
	References .....	39
	Figures .....	43
	Tables .....	44
	Appendices .....	45

## 1 Introduction

Throughout one hundred years of history, Finland has witnessed many different renovations, built up and adopted various innovations and culture from the rest of the World. Culinary is not an exception in the matter of importation. Certain amount of cuisines from diverse countries have made their ways to Finland such as Italy, France, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Nepal and especially Japan. It cannot be denied that Japanese cuisine has significant influence to Finnish taste. Many dishes have become more and more popular even in suburban areas. Sushi is the obvious example for this phenomenon. It could even be found in Lapland, up North of Finland.

Capturing this culinary trend combining with the interest of Finns in Japanese culture, a lot of restaurants have been opened across major cities in the country, especially Helsinki, providing the citizens with diverse traditional dishes such as Sushi and Ramen. Those business activities not only help in contributing to the national economy but also create opportunities for the locals to experience a distant flavor from just around corners.

Nevertheless, there is always room for new idea. Most of famous food in Japan has been introduced to the public in Finland but not Okonomiyaki. Direct translation of this term is 'grilled as you like it' (All about Japan 2017). It is a savory Japanese pancake made from an assortment of ingredients including flour, eggs, cabbage as the base and seaweed powder, fish flakes as the toppings, finished with okonomiyaki sauce along with mayonnaise.

To the best of the authors' acknowledgement, there is only one place that serves this flavorful authentic pancake in the whole city. Taking advantage of this scarcity, authors decided to venture into business on the wheel, specializing in Okonomiyaki. To be specific, a food truck selling this Japanese pancake will be introduced soon to Uusima citizens.

In order to have a well preparation for this business idea, a feasible business plan has been created which is also the key goal of this thesis. In addition, the business plan will play an important role in providing the authors with professional approach to their own business notions. On the other hand, the purpose behind the plan of establishing food truck business is to bring out the extraordinary Okonomiyaki from Japan to Finland and also to make good use of knowledge which has been gained during the study period of authors.

This thesis consists of two main parts that are theoretical background and practical implementation. Regarding the first part, four big points have been presented: entrepreneurship, start-up environment in Finland, Japanese cuisine and business plan theory. This knowledge is absorbed through the whole learning process of the authors with the major support of physical text books and reliable internet resources. Meanwhile, practical implementation includes

qualitative research methodology that is observation and interview food truck owner together with remarkable actual selling product on restaurant day.

The interview was carried with the Vietnamese owner of Taiyaki Go who has run the food truck business in the center of Helsinki for almost a year. Additionally, the practical implementation was taking part in restaurant day, selling refined prototype Okonomiyaki. On that day, authors were able to observe potential customer's react to the dish and to ask for quick feedbacks. Eventually, based on the theories and results of the implementation, a business plan was produced which is also the final outcome of this thesis.

## 2 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship may be understood as a process which allows individuals to look for opportunities to create values for society and gain profits in return. A successful entrepreneurship could be described with creativity, leadership, team building, motivation, goal orientation, problem solving, commitment, etc.

### 2.1 Definition of entrepreneurship

Throughout history, since being adopted in 1700s, the concept of entrepreneurship has been spreading strongly. Many people believe that it can be simply understood as the activity of starting one's own business and dealing with all the risks which come along. However, this is undoubtedly more than that. (American Institute in Taiwan 2017.). Although having been known since the early days, the term does not seem to have one specific trait or official definition for itself. In other words, it means different things to different people. It is interestingly swinging between human mindset and continuously creating other referenced terms. For instance, according to the CEO of business training website based in the US, entrepreneurs are the ones who try to solve the existing issues of the World profitably while observing and learning from the others. (Fernandes 2016.)

From different perspective, CEO and Co-founder of Sweeten, a general contractor in New York City, assumed entrepreneurship as the mindset that is trained to see business opportunities anywhere. It is not only about business idea but also about recognizing people who could be good partners in term of doing business. (Fernandes 2016.). Alternatively, business expert Drucker described entrepreneurs as change seekers who are willing to convert changes into opportunities that Bill Gates could be one ideal example who brought innovation for the whole information technology industry (American Institute in Taiwan 2017).

All in all, Entrepreneurs could be defined as people who start new business, ready to bear with all the risks and uncertainty to reach the goals that is gaining profit by catching oppor-

tunities and gathering necessary resources to turn them into reality (Scarborough 2014, 20). From day one, entrepreneurship has spread its spirit to every corner of the World and has placed its huge affection upon the general business. 565,000 new businesses have been launched each month in the United States only. This entrepreneurial phenomenon has been greatly recognized in business industry recently. As the result, entrepreneurs begin to gain its vital position in the economy. By reshaping the business environment and building up the new dimension in which their companies step by step become essential for the local or global economy. (Scarborough 2014, 18.)

In specific, they introduce new yet innovative products, services, create job opportunities for locals, represent businesses to foreign markets and especially during the process, they offer themselves a gift which is to do what they love most - business (Scarborough 2014, 18). Moreover, they help to increase national income in form of taxes and improve community living standard in development process like Bill Gates does with his charity organization (Seth 2015).

Anybody can come up with great business idea; nevertheless, they never act on their thoughts while entrepreneurs do. So, what else makes the difference between them and entrepreneurs? The answers lie on some of the significant traits that entrepreneurs possess. There have been lots of studies carried to identify 'the entrepreneurial personality' and it has pointed out some of the similarities. First of all, as mentioned above, it is the courage, the courage to handle and accept all the risks that probably happen during the start-up process. 'Entrepreneurs are not wild risk takers but are instead calculated risk takers' and undoubtedly, they are risk-moderate. Similarly, they are supposed to be able to cope with uncertainty in many things but still believe in their realistic and attainable objectives. (Scarborough 2014, 20-21.). Secondly, it is also about being confidence in their ability to success. This characteristic can be seen especially in the planning part of the journey. They have an abundance of confidence on what they are doing and believe it is going to make a blast. As a result, this self-confidence enables them to listen to others advices but never to doubt at themselves or lose their faith (American Institute in Taiwan 2017). Determination is also the key for entrepreneurs. Studies had shown that successful entrepreneur perform high bar of determination and they do it even better in challenging condition (Scarborough 2014, 22).

In addition, creativity is also highly considered as one of the vital traits of entrepreneurs. It is the drive of the development process and is the element that could make or break a product of start-up firms. Creativity in business is not just only thinking outside of the box, it is to always questioning, learning and bending the rule to push the business forward. (Down 2010, 64.)

Last but not least, the entrepreneurs have to own themselves the high level of flexibility. It is the ability of changing quickly to answer market needs in this rapidly changing business environment. To do so, entrepreneurs should always be sensitive to any ‘wind of change’ that could possibly happen whilst setting flexible goals. (Down 2010, 64.)

However, there is a valid argument that says personality theory is no longer a credible predictor. In fact, many entrepreneur scholars start to find the answers from cognitive science. They create basic theory base on their studies that is instead of sharing common qualities or characteristics, they adopt the same ‘thinking processes such as perception, decision-making, knowledge representation and learning’. From this perspective, human is seen as a ‘machine’ that process decision making. By practicing habits and routines, entrepreneurs could build up and develop their own business smoothly through structured and organized activities. (Down 2010, 64.)

All in all, common things among entrepreneurs should not be taken for granted whether it is about the characteristics or mindsets. This point proves that diversity is the vital quality among entrepreneurs. There is no limitation, no rule regarding ages, characteristics, nationality etc. that can determine who is a successful entrepreneur. Nevertheless, the more important thing is to learn from each other because entrepreneurs itself is a learning process.

## 2.2 The process of entrepreneurship

There are lots of available models that demonstrate the process of entrepreneurship but the most well-known and credible one is Timmons Model of Entrepreneurship (Zacharakis, Spinelly & Timmons 2011).

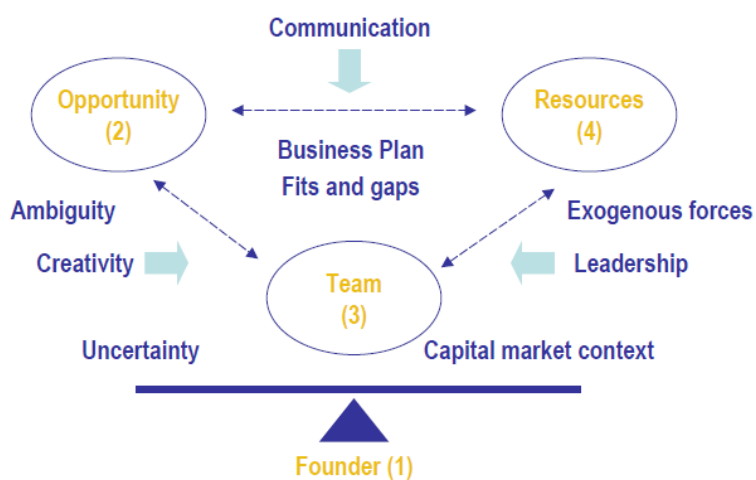


Figure 1: Timmons Models of Entrepreneurship (Zacharakis et al. 2011).

According to Figure 1, there are three elements that make up the entrepreneurial process. Unlike other mainstream thoughts that entrepreneur usually starts with idea, money or strat-



egy, the start-up process actually begins with Opportunity which is also the first stage in Timmons theory. A good idea should never be considered as a good business opportunity. The factor that makes it a 'good to great' idea is its potential level in the market. In fact, the idea only becomes feasible only when it is represented in products, service that attractive and durable. Secondly, after defining market chance, gathering resources and build up the team come as secondary importance stages. In these phases, the author once again emphasized the vital role of a good team who is able to turn good idea into profit. He mentioned the two most important roles of the team which first is to make use of creativity to get risk of any uncertainty in the opportunity. Finally, good team brings out good leadership that can control other sources effectively. On the other hand, about other resources, in contrast to many ideas, he encouraged the bootstrapping which means starting the business with as less resources as possible. This concept brings out many benefits such as minimize costs, instill willingness within the firm, encouraging innovation by making the most out of available sources. (Zacharakis et al. 2011.)

In contrast, from the simpler view, Masterson (2012) emphasized the importance of taking action after hatching a business idea. According to his perspective, the process of turning an idea to reality could be wrapped up in 3 steps:

To begin with, it is finding time or managing time. Tons of work is always there waiting to be done and it means long working hours make up a huge part in entrepreneur's routine. Hence, to work effectively, first of all, entrepreneur should find an appropriate time management system. Good practice of managing your time by adopting suitable system will not only help on improving effectiveness of working but also balancing between time budget for private life which is caring for loved ones. In addition, a genuine time management system makes a reliable foundation for entrepreneurs to set up realistic goals for the future. (Masterson 2012, 43-45.)

Secondly, it is to find money to finance the business. There are 2 core ways to rise up capital: using entrepreneur's own money and using other people's money. While the first path might take years to save for enough, the second one seems more promising. However, it might turn out to be a weakness of entrepreneurs. (Masterson 2012, 43-45.)

There are plenty of ways to reach to different investors. For example, it could be friends, family or outside investors like ones from various funding organizations across the globe. Nevertheless, once entrepreneurs have decided to reach out for help, they are putting themselves in subordinate position. Starting with persuade them to put their money in on investment by proposing a good business plan, no one else but entrepreneurs must have a good in-

sight of their potential business idea. Moreover, it is the right of investors to create restriction and to ask for report. (Masterson 2012, 43-45.)

Last is getting one up to speed. The author believed that the fastest, surest and easiest way to absorb and make use of available knowledge is to learn from a mentor who has successfully done what entrepreneurs want to do. As a further matter, it is really important to put fear aside. Risk must be obtained in order to achieve succeed. Cautious and fear are natural instinct but do not let it get in the way, taking action is the only choice to get the business off the ground. (Masterson 2012, 43-45.)

### 2.3 Hospitality entrepreneurship

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century had witnessed the massive development of modern hospitality and tourism industry which later led to the explosion of entrepreneur in such fields as an obvious result. From that point, these firms have starting to play its roles in society which either contributes to the economy and to the improvement of tourist destination and hospitality services.

#### 2.3.1 Overview of hospitality industry

Taking one of the significant hospitality entrepreneur as an example of the startup invasion that is Walt Disney or best known as an animator and film maker, it can truly said that this wave have made a huge impact to modern culture nowadays. Having had delivered souls into a huge amount of different animated character, he also cherished the idea of establishing theme parks since the early days, one of which is Disney Theme Park in Florida nowadays as shown in Figure 2. This idea was turned into reality in 1955 in California - USA with the help of funding from Bank of America and it even remained and grew until today. There is no exaggerate on saying this is one of the most extraordinary business idea. It has become an iconic and exotic destination for not only children but also adults. (Brookes & Altinay 2015, 5-9.)



Figure 2: Disney Theme Park in Ohio Florida (Platimumtravel 2015).

As psychology scientific began to captured attention of many scientist and scholars during 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quest of discovering entrepreneurs traits started to take off. Various perspectives have been exploited and developed along with history. According to the theory, entrepreneur's personalities can be sorted into five big dimensions: extraversion, neuroticism, open to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Figure 3). These remind the common identification of entrepreneur's behaviors as an indicator of success. Additionally, those personal characteristics internally linked with entrepreneurial outcomes which are creation, motivation and the growing process of the business. (Brookes & Altinay 2015, 11-12.)

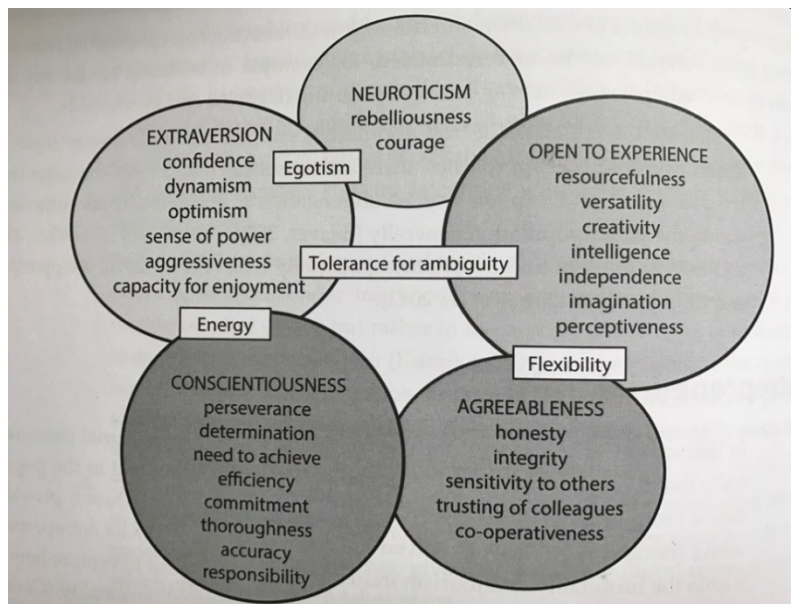


Figure 3: The Big Five domains and entrepreneurial personality (Brookes & Altinay 2015, 12).

Meanwhile, others scholar examines this psychology aspect from distinguish point of view that concern with opportunity. Such as Ahmetoglu studied the entrepreneurial personality concentrated on four entrepreneurial domains: awareness, creativity, opportunism and vision which can be observed in individual famous start-ups. Regardless the diverse of angles, the ultimate aim of these theories is to have a deeper understanding about entrepreneur world and more importantly, to take advantage of this helpful knowledge in tourism and hospitality context. (Brookes & Altinay 2014, 12.)

### 2.3.2 Restaurant entrepreneurship and its challenges

Nowadays, dining out has turned into one of the most pleasure choices among social or family activities. Enjoying good food, nice atmosphere and having fun with companies at the same time have been talked as a priority and demand in life for some people. This creates ideal condition for restaurant industry to bloom.

Hundreds and thousands of restaurant entrepreneurs have joined the movement by starting up their own restaurants or caf . Some even make it to the top from zero and set the new bars for the future. So what makes a successful restaurant enterprise in this competitive market? The answer is clear, good financial is the key. Return on investment, making profit and even developing the restaurant to the small chain are indicators of good restaurant business. Like other start-ups, to be at the head of the game, restaurant entrepreneurs should be well-prepared in terms of experiences, planning, financial, physical and mental health, and also luck. (Walker 2011, 4.)

It is easier said than done. The struggle is getting even harder for restaurant start-ups as the restaurant industry is considered the most competitive market nowadays. Restaurant entrepreneurs give up a lot in their lives to start running their business, including time. According to Walker (2011, 13), long working hours is one of the rules in this restaurant field. While some people take this as a favor, others cannot overcome it and then get stressed out. This long last fatigue could possibly lead to many more physical problems. 70 hours per week is the medium pace that restaurant operators have to work, which is the challenge to make the most out of that long period. On the other hand, spending too much time on work means owning less time for personal life. As a consequence, this makes people easily get burned out, especially, this is undoubtedly harder for restaurant entrepreneurs who are parents. Therefore, the balance puzzle is always there waiting to be tackled. (Walker 2011, 13.)

Another obvious challenge that every restaurateur has to deal with is investment or simply known as financial. The possibility of getting lost is high during the first couple of years. It is even sadder if investment comes from friends or family. That is why potential restaurateurs are advised to carefully consider whether their personal ability, reconcilability and financial issues etc. can harmonize with their businesses. Similarly, the current economy situation should be taken into consideration as it is one of the factors that might make or break a business. (Walker 2011, 14.)

Managing a restaurant asks a lot from restaurateurs in terms of energy and endurance. Reality has proved that successful restaurant entrepreneurs are often energetic, consistent and are able to work even better under high pressure. In addition, as mentioned above, long working hours is the norm of this industry. For example, weekends and holidays are the peak period of restaurants. Staffs in general might work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, but it is a different story for the owners whose load of work is endless and requires even more in the busiest seasons. Therefore, it is fair to say that there is no room for restaurant operators who want weekend-offs. (Walker 2011, 13-15.)

Necessary knowledge on various fields is the foundation of the business. Understanding about business administration, hospitality and especially the product itself which particularly food in this case, is the stepping stone of the hierarchy. On the one hand, lacking aware of food knowledge might cause difficulties for the start. On the other hand, shortage of managing skill in general could probably lead to bankruptcy. The world has witnessed many skilled-chefs failed without these management traits. All in all, before kicking off the business, obtaining necessities in food service business is vital for restaurateurs. (Walker 2011, 13-15.)

Competition is another challenge that restaurant start-ups have to conquer. Many researchers have pointed out the high rate of business failure. A year or two or even longer is the period of time that restaurants need before reaching breakeven point and start making profit. Regardless the true statistic, there is one fact could not be ignored is that opening a restaurant involves plenty of risk. (Walker 2011, 13-15.)

Restaurants located near center suburban face higher competition than the other areas. The situation gets even more challenging for small and independent restaurants as they have to compete with large and famous ones which could capture customers' attention easier. Hence, small start-ups need to have distinctive characteristics to draw in customers and keep up with the competition. (Walker 2011, 13-15.)

### 3 Start-up in Finland

Being one of the top innovative countries in the World, Finland is truly a promising land for start-ups in general, providing the proof that in recent years, number of start-ups in Helsinki has been sky-rocketed. From 200 new established companies in 2012, the number has been risen up to 350 in 2015 (Korbet 2015). Similarly, statistics from the Startup 100 have shown that there are over 800 start-up companies operated in various fields among whose majority is IT and gaming industry.

#### 3.1 Start-up environment

There are a lot of reasons behind this increasing Entrepreneurial spirit in Finland. To begin with, the ecosystem is the first factor that affects the whole business environment. It is the ecosystem that highly supportive one another. For example, Mr. Jarvilehto, Rovio's Former Vice President, left his position to start-up gaming company named 'Seriously' and still got support from Rovio for his new venture. (Dickey 2013.)

Secondly, massive support from the government plays a very important role in creating a friendly ecosystem for entrepreneurs by committing on helping out long-term development within small and medium size companies. Specifically, public funded organization has been

set up to offer help in innovation and development for new-born business (Team Finland Health 2016). For instance, Tekes is the most important funding expert organization in term of financial support for research, development and innovation (Business Finland 2017). In addition, the agency has also raised the fund for less than five years old company up to 80%.

Last but not least, the most vivid factor could be mentioned here is the young spirit and movement of entrepreneur within education environment. Many events for start-up enterprises were held across the country during a year. This shows lots of interests either of the entrepreneurs and investors or government towards start-up field. (Team Finland Health 2016.)

Slush, one of the biggest and well-known ones in Northern Europe taken place annually in Helsinki, is a significant and exotic example. With its motto remain the same from the first place: helping 'the next generation of great, world-conquering companies forward'. Slush has grown to be a world re-owned event which is now going global. With participation from more than 2300 start-up companies and over 1000 investors including many big names such as Google as showed in Figure 4, the event managed to attracted huge media attention and expanding its reputation among the entrepreneur community of the World and moreover, making Finland one of the centers for start-ups in Northern Europe and Russia. (Slush 2017.)

However, this is just the start, the quality of these events in Finland are just glooming bigger and bigger in quantity as well as in quality. Going with the flow, Aalto Entrepreneurship Society, Aaltoes, was established to help new enterprises get ready for challenges ahead and at the same time encourage competitions, pitching session in the community. (Slush 2017.)



Figure 4: Slush event in Helsinki (Slush 2017).

This phenomenon has indicated the movement of entrepreneur in Finland and has showed that Finland has owned itself a strong and potential human resource. Furthermore, as mentioned above, this entrepreneur movement make positive impacts on the economy for it creates new jobs, improves living standard and social welfare etc. (Slush 2017.) Overall, with all of these characteristics: stable, predictable and least corrupted plus its vivid and active ecosystem, there is no doubt that Finland is one of the most ideal destinations for those who are seeking for business opportunities.

### 3.2 Legal aspect of establishing a company in Finland

Like the rest of the world, establishing a business in Finland coming as a process. After going through compulsory brain storming stages to hatch a business idea, entrepreneurs could now study legal aspect on opening a new enterprise or in short it is paper procedure that Finnish government requires. Based on the Guide of Becoming an entrepreneur in Finland 2016, foremost, entrepreneur should make sure the business is subject to business license granted by the authority. (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016.)

The next thing to do is finding suitable premises or accommodation for business operations. Thereafter, entrepreneurs decide on the name and form of the enterprise (Figure 5) before filling out startup documents and notifications whose instruction could be found on The Business Information System website. (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016.)

Private trader (Trade name)	Partnerships	Limited liability company	Co-operative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entrepreneur</li> <li>Self-employed</li> </ul> <p><b>Start-up documents:</b> No separate start-up document required. (Business licence, where necessary)</p> <p>Start-up notification Y3 ja personal data form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General partnership</li> <li>Limited partnership (Ky)</li> </ul> <p><b>Start-up documents:</b> Partnership agreement (Business licence, where necessary)</p> <p>Start-up notification Y2 and personal data form</p> <p>The start-up notification must be submitted within 3 months from the signing of the partnership agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private (Oy)</li> <li>Public (Oyj)</li> </ul> <p><b>Start-up documents:</b> Memorandum of Association, Articles of Association, Where necessary, minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors (the chairman of the Board, holders of procuration, persons authorised to represent the company elected at the meeting or, e.g., auxiliary trade name adopted) (Business licence, where necessary)</p> <p>Start-up notification Y1 and appendix form 1 as well as the personal data form</p> <p>The start-up notification must be submitted within 3 months from the signing of the Memorandum of Association.</p>	<p><b>Start-up documents:</b> Memorandum of Association, Rules of the co-operative, Where necessary, minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors (the chairman of the Board, holders of procuration, persons authorised to represent the co-operative elected at the meeting or, e.g., auxiliary trade name adopted) (Business licence, where necessary)</p> <p>Start-up notification Y1 and appendix form 1 as well as the personal data form</p>
Private trader	General partnership and limited partnership	Limited liability company	Co-operative
Start-up notification or application for prepayment and for change in withholding tax percentage VEROH 5010e	Start-up notification or application for prepayment and for change in withholding tax percentage VEROH 5010e.	Income tax prepayment application form/corporate taxpayer VEROH 5017e	Income tax prepayment application form/corporate taxpayer VEROH 5017e

Figure 5: Required documents for different forms of enterprise (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016).

Afterward, arrange book keeping is compulsory in Finland, entrepreneurs could either do it on their own or choose to work with advisable accounting companies. Taking various insurance such as entrepreneur's pension insurance YEL or self-employed person's voluntary insurance and joining an entrepreneur's unemployment fund within 3 months from the beginning of business operation are obligatory. (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016.) Finally, filling application for prepayment with the Tax Administration is the last step to complete basic paper procedure in Finland. Moreover, if the enterprise wants to become an employer, owners shall prepare for more paperwork such as working contracts or registration in the Tax Administration's Employer register and also join the Worker's Compensation Insurance as stated in the labor law. (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016.)

### 3.3 Restaurant startup in Finland

Recently, the demand for diversity of culinary in Finland in general and Helsinki in particular has been rising quickly. A big amount of cuisines coming from different countries have been imported and introduced to Finland one way or another. It brings a lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs who want to set up something new for this market.

#### 3.3.1 Overview of startup environment in hospitality industry

Restaurateurs' spirit enriches not only the experiences of the people but also the national culinary world. According to the city officials, in 2016, approximately 200 restaurants had been opened while just 70 of same concept business had to be shut down (News now staff 2017). The figures have proved that despite all the possible difficulties such as expensive rental revenue or unstable demand, many amateur cooks have been trying to make an effort of becoming restaurateurs.

Besides, there are lots of people with potential business idea are able to call for investment from big hospitality organizations. For instance, Royal Ravintolat Oy is the largest operation in the field with nearly 50 restaurants served different cuisines, Hanko sushi and Pizzarium chain. The gross value of the company in 2017 was over 100 million euros and it is able to manage more than 1000 people. With such big extend, the organization creates promise opportunity for restaurateurs who are incapable of deliver proper prospective idea. (Royal Ravintolat 2017.)





Figure 6: Restaurant day in Kallio Herkut, Helsinki (Sarparanta 2011).

On the other hand, restaurant day in Helsinki is an ideal event for people who want to test their idea for a day with minimum restriction. In specific, it is the day that any people can open their own pop-up restaurants as showed in Figure 6, with the main goals of sharing diversity in cuisine experiments and having fun in this special foodie carnival that held 4 times in a year (Restaurant day 2017). In term of business, the event makes it possible for entrepreneurs to run their business without worrying about issues regarding authority such as tax, health inspection or permission.

### 3.3.2 The process of starting up a restaurant

As stated by NewCo Helsinki (2015), in Finland, entrepreneurs are required for many different papers and permits to launch a business after revising their business ideas. Once those permissions or notifications were taken care, entrepreneurs can now seek for suitable premises. After coming up with a well-prepared business plan which creates a solid foundation to build up the business for real, a lease agreement for business premises should be the next thing that restaurateurs should working on. With renting being the most used way to procure premises, rental agreement is the vital document which must be handled precisely. A fixed term of 5-10 years contract is the most common one as this considered to be the ideal period for such new opened restaurants to repair, furnish and marketing. It is commonly good practice to include different aspect other than rent such as responsibility for repair, innovate or maintenance cost. (NewCo Helsinki 2015.)

On the other hand, the premises need to meet lots of requirements to qualify as a restaurant or café premises. For instead, there must be enough space to cook and store variety of indeed ingredients which also must solve the hygiene factor at the same time. Also, any alterations

regarding terraces, furnishing or advertising signs usually require other permission from the authority which usually is the Building Control Department. Such construction changes applied to the premises should be first sketched by architectures or designers as the final layout must be submitted together with other documents as well. (NewCo Helsinki 2015.)

Similar to Control Building permit, restaurateurs should take care of requirements for food safety and the serving of food alcoholic beverages. Specifically, in Helsinki, 4 weeks before going to operation, new restaurant must submit a notification to the Environment Centre. The same rule is applied for mobile catering service or better known as 'Food Truck'. Before the permission is granted, restaurateurs must be prepared to provide further needed information such as a self-supervision plan which consists of quality and safety food control or the relevance of operating conditions. (NewCo Helsinki 2015.)

Moreover, the food control authority performs inspection couple of times a year and the reports for each restaurant are published at Oiva website, which contributes on the effort of reducing health risk caused by food. Alcohol is part of dining habits for Finnish and also is a profitable business for restaurants. Nevertheless, to qualify for selling alcohol, restaurants must gain permission from Regional State Administrative Agency. Inquiries for the license include a qualified responsible manager, a personnel plan and a description of serving area. Other necessary permits are required by fire and rescue services or the permits for the use of music if the restaurants are making use of sound sensation. (NewCo Helsinki 2015.)

Last but not least, before the business going to take off, personnel or staffs issue must be resolved. Suitable persons should be filled in appropriate positions depend on the scale of the restaurant itself. Staffs ought to be qualified for the job with basic knowledge, good skill and qualification such as hygiene or alcohol passport. On the employer side, under the law, they should sign the contracts binding employees and take care of occupational healthcare and safety at workplace. Likewise, personal social and unemployment security or pension contributions are responsibilities that carry by employers. (NewCo Helsinki 2015.)

#### 3.4 Food truck start up in Finland

Food truck is a new born concept but rapidly grows and becomes an important feature of the food and beverage industry. The reasons why food truck businesses are attracting new entrepreneurs are the low entry costs compared to starting a restaurant, combined with many low costs, or even free, methods in approaching the public such as social media. This phenomenon is booming the industry, leading to the increase in quantity, quality and variety of food trucks. Besides, customers tend to be willing to pay for getting food from these trucks, due to the fast and convenience they bring.

A food truck is defined as ‘a movable kitchen, canteen, or catering truck that sells food or drinks’ (Phillips 2012). Since long time ago in many countries, it was very common to see some ice cream carts running on the street with their bells ringing to attract children. At that time, frozen or prepackaged food was mostly sold in food carts, such as ice cream, ready-made drinks or dishes which required less time to cook etc. However, selling food at street sides was only for lower social classes, both sellers and buyers. It was until 2008 when Roy Choi opened his first Kogi truck, which was considered one of the first gourmet food trucks, in Los Angeles that the phenomenon of restaurants-on-wheels becomes popular worldwide. (Delaware 2015.)

Those trucks are usually equipped like real restaurants with full equipment needed to make their specialty dishes. They have on-board kitchens and prepare all of their meals from scratch. Some of them offer specific meals for breakfast, lunch or late night snacks. The good point for selling only one dish is the quality is put a lot of effort in to improve, as well as less risky in the recovery of capital. According to Delaware’s info graphic (2015), on top of the most popular food items offered is hot sandwiches with 71%, following by Mexican cuisine with 61% and cold sandwiches with 44%.

Food trucks can normally be found in heavily populated areas, in city centers, near business buildings or at some festivals. Most of the trucks move around throughout the day so they can maximize their income. Sometimes, they are hired for special events such as weddings, movie shootings, company meetings, and as a part of advertising campaign for corporates and brands.

#### 3.4.1 Development factors

As mentioned above, the middle and upper social classes rarely bought food from street vendors since they thought it was not clean and usually for lower or working classes. Conversely, food trucks are becoming more and more popular over the world. The factors which help them to rise and occupy the important position in hospitality industry are the recession and technology - especially social media.

First of all, the economic downturn has led many people to be unemployed. The most common solution for them is to take part in food industry, as eating is an essential need. It takes at least \$500 000 to establish a restaurant, while less than \$100 000 to set up a food truck. Ultimately, food truck seems to be a better idea. (Phillips 2012.)

In addition, some people like going out to eat. Nevertheless, with decreasing income due to the recession, people are looking for less expensive options than a fancy restaurant, and food truck is one of their choices. Food trucks not only are cheaper, but also offer special dishes

based on background of the owner. They provide both full meals and small bites if customers want to try many different types of food. (Phillips 2012.)

It can raise a question of why people do not choose some fast food chain, such as Mc Donald's or Burger King, for a cheap meal. Nowadays young generation has high awareness of what they eat. Food vendors cook their meals with fresh and high quality ingredients, making their food healthier and better in quality than rich-in-calories fast food.

Beside the recession, technology also plays a key role in the development of food truck trend. Young people are likely to take photos of their food and post them on their personal pages. The popularity of social media leads to more opportunities given to those kitchen-on-wheels to establish and expand their brand. (Phillips 2012.)

Using social media like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, food truck owners are able to communicate with their followers continuously and announce their locations. Technology brings along benefits for customers as well. They are able to access to the latest information about the concerned trucks. Additionally, food truck culture created through social media is easier to approach potential customers and build a strong connection between them and the trucks.

#### 3.4.2 SWOT analysis

SWOT is the short form for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. SWOT is usually used to access a business and/ or a proposition. However, the benefit of SWOT is beyond for businesses, it can be helpful for individuals, organizations and team building. Moreover, it might be applied to the competitors of one's business. (Lawrence 2009.)

The SWOT analysis not only helps businesses develop but also change personal life. Although it is just a tool, it can become a powerful tool if used correctly. The aim and goal of SWOT analysis is to evaluate the feasibility of businesses or ideas. Besides, it also reveals a list of some positive and negative factors affecting businesses. (Lawrence 2009.)

This method allows organizations to quickly evaluate both internal factors which have relation to internal functioning and external factors which organization cannot influence and depend on the environment evolved. SWOT analysis is considered as a useful decision-making tool for the development strategies of small and medium businesses. It is mainly used today by the marketing departments of large organizations. (Speth 2015.)

Generally, SWOT analysis is simple, but can be complex when applied to specific situations or organizations. SWOT is considered a method of putting information into a logical order, leading managers or CEOs to clearly understand their businesses or new ideas. It provides a suitable

ble basis for the strategies, business propositions, the position of the organization, the direction which the company is following or discovers the potential improvements and developments. (Lawrence 2009.)

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different locations</li> <li>• Catering services delivery</li> <li>• Low entry costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive issues</li> <li>• Hygiene and food safety regulations</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More owner-operated trucks</li> <li>• Licensing and franchising food truck concept</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive problems</li> <li>• Unique and difference</li> </ul>

Table 1: SWOT analysis of food truck.

Table 1 indicates the SWOT analysis of food truck in short. The common problem that many restaurants are entangling is their hard-to-see retail locations. Opposite to restaurants, food trucks have a benefit of being able to move to new locations to increase their revenue. As mentioned above, food truck can be driven around different high-traffic zones during breakfast, lunch, dinner and late night. Another advantage of owning a food truck is that these operators have ability to deliver catering services, which could bring back a large income for them. Lastly, the entry cost for establishing a food truck is far less than setting up a new restaurant. According to Food Truck HQ (2016), the average opening costs of starting up a food truck is approximately \$90 300 from which around \$80 000 is for the truck and equipment installed, while the rest consists of the initial product inventory, permits and license, uniforms, paper products, fire extinguisher and other miscellaneous expenses.

On the other hand, the more popular the food trucks become in hospitality industry, the more competitive issues which these businesses are facing are considerable. Furthermore, the law related to food service businesses such as hygiene and food safety must be strictly followed throughout operating. It is harder for food and ingredients be kept hygiene since they are made on the street.

Having a food truck, the owners are having more selections in business growing opportunities. The most common and logical way to develop their brand is to open more trucks (Weber 2012). However, with this method, documenting every day, week and month is necessary for control of income and expenses. Another opportunity for food truck owners is having the truck concept licensed and franchised (Weber 2012). It might seem better idea than the pre-

vious one because each truck will be taken care of by someone who has a passion for it. Conversely, since the initial cost for operating a food truck is low, entrepreneurs may like to establish their own business; therefore, the operation plans should be carefully prepared to prove that the franchising will bring enough value for both franchisers and franchisees.

Nevertheless, the low opening cost for having a food truck is also a minus point. It attracts more entrepreneurs who have unique ideas of food service and dream of testing them in reality. In order to stay long in this industry, food truck owners should make themselves different and unique among others in their target markets.

#### 4 Japanese cuisine

The popularity of Japanese cuisine is rising rapidly in the past decade. Therein sushi contributed a big part to make public pay much more attention to Japanese food than ever before. Once, it was a mystery to the world cuisine as Japanese people ate raw fish. However, with the expansion of sushi, it was no longer mysterious and Japanese food was welcomed by other countries. (Kazuko 2002, 6.)

Nevertheless, Japanese cooking concept is different from Western countries and is believed to be less complicated. As Kazuko (2002, 6) states in her book, 'If you can eat anything straight from the ground or out of the water, it's the best - of not the only - way to experience the natural taste of food'. This concept is seen as the core of Japanese philosophy of eating so most of their cooking is kept simple.

##### 4.1 History of Japanese cuisine

Japanese cuisine is believed to be highly philosophical. The food on Japanese table is a harmonious and ingenious combination of many elements: local specialties, seasonal ingredients, historical impacts on food choices and decoration techniques, which are considered the most important. It is prepared carefully, paying attention to detail of the color, the shape of the food, bowl and plates on the table. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003.)

The cuisine of Japan had strong influences from Korea and China. Around 400 B.C, rice was introduced by Korea to Japan, which is now a staple of this country. Similarly, China introduced soy bean and wheat to Japan soon after rice, together with the use of chopsticks and tea. (Kazuko 2002, 8-9.)

Religion was one of the important factors in the history of Japanese cuisine. When Buddhism became the official religion in Japan, the consumption of meat was seen as sinful, leading the nation to prohibit meat eating. As a result, the amount and kind of spices used on food de-

creased and were limited. Therefore the Japanese started to eat fish instead of meat. (Kazuko 2002, 8-9.)

Geography and climate of Japan makes their agricultural products noticeably differ from season to season, which has a clear effect on seasonal food. Thanks to the unique geography of long and narrow country, Japan is blessed with produce ranging of agricultural such as rice, apples, sugar cane, mango and papaya. Besides, Japan is considered one of the world's richest fisheries thanks to the warm and cold flow around the coastline. (Kazuko 2002, 10-15.)

Japanese cuisine today still contains the same staples of rice, vegetables and seafood. Their meals are based on the seasons and their geography. The quality of the food, freshness, presentation and the balance of different flavors are focused on instead of the quantity.

When tea was first introduced to Japan by China, it did not gain much attention. No sooner than the Zen monks disseminated did the tea culture and the habit of drinking tea be spread among the aristocratic and samurai classes. The tea ceremony is an ancient art which brings food, drink and culture together. (Kazuko 2002, 9.)

#### 4.2 Characteristics of Japanese cuisine

Japanese cuisine is known for its traditional dishes and unique culinary art. Similarly to other Asian countries, Japan has developed rice agriculture; therefore, rice is considered as the main ingredient in the Japanese meals. Due to the long coastline, seafood and seaweed make up the majority of their diet, and are also the prime source of protein. The style is often paid attention as well as the food is processed sophisticatedly, creating the characteristic flavor of Japanese dishes such as raw food, steamed, boiled. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003.)

The taste of Japanese dishes is simpler than that of Western food. The reason is that seasonings are not overused but the fresh and pure taste of the ingredients is emphasized. The natural flavor and color is kept, making the taste of Japanese dishes elegant and gentle. Japanese cuisine is a skillful and sophisticated combination of color, flavor and traditional religion. The quantity is not focused, but the quality of the dishes, decoration and ingredient mixtures is paid careful attention in order to create attractive and delicious meals. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003.)

Japanese food is well balanced and good for health, which explains the Japanese longevity. It contains low fat, low protein and high HDL - a fatty protein transporting cholesterol to liver to disintegrate. Moreover, traditional side dishes are often cooked vegetable based. The vegetable are cooked lightly such as blanching, lightly steaming or quick cooking instead of frying

or long stewing. As a result, caloric value and vitamins are maintained. (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003.)

Not as people think about, aside from worldwide popularity of sushi and noodles, Japanese cuisine is rarely known. One of the most difficulties in introducing traditional Japanese food oversea is the ingredients. Many common ingredients used in their recipe can hardly be found outside Japan (Ashkenazi & Jacob 2003); or expensive if found.

#### 4.3 Okonomiyaki - a Japanese style pancake

Okonomiyaki was chosen as the main product of the food truck. It is a Japanese-style pancake with the name meaning 'what you like, cooked' (All about Japan 2017). As the name means, it can be completed with all favorite ingredients of the maker on grilled flour batter and cabbage. Okonomiyaki was invented in Japan before World War II, evolved and became more famous during and after the war due to the scarceness of rice. It is sometimes called Japanese pancake or Japanese pizza. It is a savory dish with the similar shape to an omelet. It is made with flour, cabbage, meat or seafood and topped with okonomi sauce, mayonnaise, chopped spring onion, dried seaweed and dried fish flakes - which is called bonito.

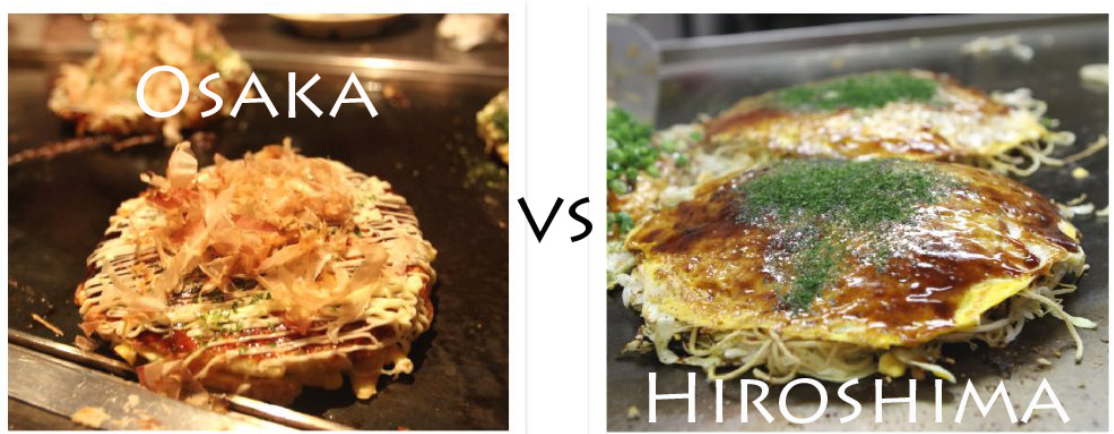


Figure 7: Osaka Okonomiyaki vs Hiroshima Okonomiyaki (Jenjenk 2010).

In Japan, there are two different types of Okonomiyaki, Osaka style and Hiroshima style (Okonomiyaki World 2016). In the former, all of the ingredients are mixed with the batter before being grilled on the both side, following by being added various toppings. On the other hand, in the latter, a small thin pancake is grilled and layered by other ingredients beginning with a huge amount of shredded cabbage. All ingredients are added in layers, and then the pancake is flipped over onto a fried egg or noodles. Figure 7 shows the differences between Osaka Okonomiyaki and Hiroshima version.



## 5 Business plan theory

Business plan undoubtedly is an integral role in reflecting the possibility and opportunity of a potential business idea. It can either make or break that idea in this competitive industry.

### 5.1 The importance of a business plan

Sounding as simple as it is, business plan in general have been defined as a written document that describe what a subject is going to do and how to do it. In particular, business plan is a description that presents a business's future vision or goals and how it is going to achieve those objectives (Entrepreneur 2017). It is the living document that is always needed to be reshaped and revised frequently since there are numerous factors that make impacts on business growth which make the plan keeps on changing (Zacharakis, Spinelly & Timmons 2011, 12). On the other hand, business plan might be considered as communication tool between entrepreneurs and others which displays also management ability and determination (Barrow, Barrow & Brown 2015, xiii-xv).

Preparing a business plan undoubtedly is one of the vital steps to take before starting a business for real. This task requires lots of time and effort from the doers if they truly want to make the best version of it. Whether it is a 'rookie' entering new market or an 'expert' trying to make bigger impacts on the industry, such time and effort are worth devoting if ones want to crystallize and stay focus on the idea. (Barrow et al. 2015, xiii-xv.)

Business plan is meant for serving multiple purposes; however, the ultimate one is to play the role of a blueprint or a map which could ameliorate the chances of reaching the destinations. This important point following by many other reasons that make a good business plan become vital such as its ability to enables enterprise making mistake on paper rather than in the marketplace where mistake could cost not only money. (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 13.)

Additionally, the well-structured business plan will lift up the confidence within oneself in the ability to take action and start the venture. From the beginning, there are many predicted and surprise obstacles could lessen the entrepreneurial spirit and those challenges could be the test for a business plan. (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 13-15.)

On top of that, under-capitalization and early cash-flow problems are the big two reasons that break new born firms and an effective business plan can minimize these risks. Also, it could experiment with various back up strategies so the best one could be taken into consideration. Lastly, the understanding and knowledge gained during the process of creating business plan will back up and prepare businesses with any changes and in return enable it to adapt quickly with any alter. (Barrow et al. 2015, xiii-xv.)

All in all, business plans bring about great amount of valuable benefits. Studies and empirical statistics have pointed out the advantages and essential of business planning. Many enterprises are outperforming all other rivals thanks to a well-prepared and strong business plan. Regardless superiorities that planning a head in details, a part of entrepreneurs still attempt to start their own business without a plan such as businesses that need little or no capital or whose founders invest by their own money. This attempt could result in losing money and even killing the idea and entrepreneur themselves. (Barrow et al. 2015, xiii-xv.)

## 5.2 Distributed factors of an effective business plan

A good business plan must have some constant characteristics. Learning how to make one takes lots of time and devotion and before taking action one must bear in mind the qualities of a genuine plan besides the original template. To begin with, details are always the initial and priority in writing a plan. Listing product and service should not stop at numbering them but it must go beyond the listing task. Every element should have particular description and its scope. As for instance, detailed market or competitor research or touch base of the product and service is always making a plus point and is highly appreciated in the business plan. (Chia 2010.)

Next, as mentioned earlier, clear market research is one of the demands in writing a business plan among which competitor research is vital. By identifying other rivals on the scale of their share in the market, the product's range and their operation process etc. New enterprise can learn the basis or the hack and being better in time. (Chia 2010.)

A list of every indeed resources will probably helpful in financial management. From equipment, technology to raw materials or depreciation cost, all of those small features should be included in a business plan. Listing these will sketch a prediction for approximate capital needed to start a venture or the amount of money supposed to be earned in order to break even or become profitable. (Chia 2010.)

Formal format and writing style are the must and highly recommended in the whole plan. As well as suitable language and clear writing are basic requirements of a good business plan. Due to the fact that the business plan might be read by other parties such as investors, mentors or business partners, it must be well-written and organized so readers will be able to find what they need easily. Slang or speaking language should be refrained from using. (Chia 2010.)

Lastly, making the plan your own and keeping it short are one of the regular advices. In the writing the process, entrepreneurs might continuously asking for help and ideas from other

people like mentors, at some point it is considered helpful however, overusing this reference will turn personal business plan into someone else's instead. The consequence will be the shortage in understanding the plan in depth. In addition, 40 pages apparently is the most ideal length for a good business plan, keeping it short yet crystallize. (Chia 2010.)

### 5.3 Content of a basic business plan

A load of business plan templates can be found from different sources. With key word 'Business plan templates', one could get over 10 million results within less than 0.6 seconds. This shows the fact that creating a business plan is the puzzle for enterprise to tackle. There are variations among those framework but yet most plan have similar components listed in the Table 2.

Features	Content	Function
Cover Page	Company name, Tag line, Contact person, Address, phone, fax, email, date, disclaimer and copy number.  Controlling distribution	Emphasize basic contact information of the company.  Draw reader's attention
Executive Summary	Description of Opportunity Business concept, Industry Overview, Target Market, Competitive Advantages, Business Model, Team and Offering.	Give readers the overview of the plan.  Capture readers' interest on the plan
Table of Content	All the sections of the plan from major to subsections, appendices.	Provide readers with a map to easily find targeted information.
Detailed Sections	Vary for different business plans with each different major section play its crucial role for the whole plan.  For example: Marketing plan, development plan, financial plan, risks and offering...	Point out all the details in the operation of the company.

Table 2: Content of a business plan (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 46-53).

There are many factors that make the outline of business plans different to one and another such as the scale of the plan itself or the purpose of its company. However, there are four big basic elements that make a business that are cover page, executive summary, table of content and other detailed sections. Firstly, the cover page is should include specific contact methods of the company like its name, address, phone number etc. in order to emphasize its identity. (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 46-53.)

Next, executive summary is probably the most crucial part as it shows a summary of the whole plan and indicates many other important elements like company's business concept, target market and customer segmentation and company's offering. This part not only provides readers with overview of the plan but also plays a role as attention drawer. Therefore, it is definitely a vital part for the firms especially in the case they want to call for investment. (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 46-53.)

Table of content is the next part that could be found after executive summary. It appears as a map that consists of all sections and sub-sections that makes it easier for readers to find information they need and track the whole plan. Last but not least, it is all the detailed essential sections such as marketing, financial plan, risk management, etc. Those offer readers with specific plan for every operation phase of the company. (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 46-53.)

## 6 Research methodology - Qualitative methods

There are variety kinds of methodology being applied in different scales and one of which is Qualitative method. As its names have said it all, qualitative method seeks for 'quality' or digs for the deeper understanding in the phenomenal or in the subject that are being studied.

### 6.1 Overview of qualitative research methodology

Qualitative method is the scientific research method that includes the set of procedures to answer the question systematically. The aim is to collect evidences in order to study base on those to proceed for the ultimate goal that is to filter the findings that are applicable in or beyond the research problem. Or it can be simply understood at researching about one or more person's personal lives, emotions, behaviors, etc. towards the issue that are under exploring. (O'Leary 2014.)

There come pros and cons when choosing qualitative methods. For the advantage, as said above, qualitative methodologies provide researchers with opportunities to enrich data as those methods are designed as open-ended format. It enables participants to cross the boundaries, create free speech or comments about any issue that concern with the problem rather than choosing fixed answers. This pro brings along many more advantages, during the

process, based on replies, researchers could explore new areas of the issue. This is not creating new problem for oneself but it is having chances to learn and grow. Also, comparing to quantitative methods, qualitative ones could solve more complex questions for the researchers or even it helps to build new theories in the field. All in all, the, the flexibility within qualitative research methods highlighted its strengths in methodology area. (O'Leary 2014, 40-45.)

It can be said that, when talking about qualitative methods, people usually think of Interview first and tend to forget about many others such as observation or ethnography or action research. Each technique, probably, requires different approaches and skills. The key is to choose the most suitable one for oneself. It needs suit well with the characteristics of the topic as well as offer practical and right answers to the problem that researchers try to tackle. Moreover, meeting researcher's ability is also one of the essential requests that need to be adapted when it comes to choosing research methods. (O'Leary 2014, 40-45.)

Regarding ability of researchers, there are lots of categories such as economy, time, scale of the project and researcher's knowledge and experience are undoubtedly the most important factors that need to be considered. For example, bachelor thesis may probably research for less complex issues, using one or two methods, require fixed loads of work while doctoral thesis is carried under larger boundaries. Last but not least, whether researchers choose to stick with what methods, ethnics and creditability are vital. Ultimately, researchers are responsible for the whole process. Reliability is the indicator of good research and is the foundation all researches - with power comes great responsibility. (O'Leary 2014, 40-45.)

## 6.2 Interview method

Communication or conversation is the way to give and receive information such as emotions, behaviors or feelings. It is the never-ending source of knowledge about either personal or social. Exchanging information serve different purposes one of which is to study the World and as times goes by, mankind have been developed, sharpened and revised those exchanged talk into various forms including interview. It is known as formal meetings in which a list of questions will be asked in return for answers that will later on be used for other goals. Data collected after the talk will be then put together in formal formats to reach objectives. (Brinkmann 2013, 30-32.)

In qualitative research, interview is a burden and a blessing as the same time. On the one hand, some argued that it is more about individual; it could not reflect the general situation or the big picture. Some even consider interview is the most objective ones among all existing method. Interview often being misunderstood as an easiest method to practice but reality has shown it differently. It is true that research something base on individual experience by talk-

ing to them can grasp the demanding features of qualitative methods which is to understand deeply a subject - that is the blessing side of interviewing. (Brinkmann 2013,30-32.). However, the most important part to be conducted is transforming raw data into concrete and usable inquiry. This is the biggest deal and requiring lots of skills and techniques from researcher.

Qualitative interview can be divided into two big categories which are individual and focus group interview. In this research project, individual interview will be implemented; it is interviews that are conducted in one-on-one format. This kind of interview gives interviewer a chance to lead the conversation in to the form and the direction that benefit interest of the research. Also, under some circumstances, individual interview should be held in other to keep interviewee's confidential. For example, if the topic is about some sensitive or taboo problems or interviewees want to keep their identity concealed then private interview would be ideal choice. (Brinkmann 2013, 32.)

All in all, qualitative methodology in general and interview method in specific have been proving themselves as one of the most useful and important in the academic World despite the fact that each and every kind of interview has its own pros and cons. It brings about many benefits that researchers can see in depth understanding of a specific issue. Thanks to its flexibility, it gives researchers a chance to approach the puzzle closer and to study it in different perspectives. However, everything has its price so it requires a careful preparation from researcher's side for every stage. From the beginning, all the small details should not be taken for granted.

### 6.2.1 Interview with Taiyaki Go

Taiyaki Go is a food truck which sells waffles with different fillings and some drinks. It was opened since the beginning of 2017 at Iso Omena (Figure 8). Recently, after traveling the truck around Espoo and Helsinki, the owner decided to open one more food truck at the center of Helsinki, which is her favorite location. The reason why she chose winter to establish her business is to warm up customers with the best winter food of Japan - hot and sweet, cute and delicious hand-sized fish-shaped waffles filled with different flavors of customer's choices.

Taiyaki Go food truck is operated by a Vietnamese who has 5 year experience in the hospitality industry, particularly food and beverage services. According to the owner, customer segment of the food truck could be anyone who has interest in sweet and desserts. As observation, Taiyaki Go's customers are mostly students, office workers who want a sweet treat at their break time and coffee time, travelers who have a trip to downtown. Among them, local

students and local businessmen are considered as potential customers to create long-term relationship with the truck and its service.



Figure 8: Taiyaki Go food truck.

Taiyaki Go's menu was fulfilled based on the owner's knowledge and study of customer demands. They offer a fish-shaped batter with a wide range of fillings of sweet bites such as red bean paste which is the original version, nutella, custard, or savory version such as cheese, bacon, tuna, etc. There are also some choices of coffee, tea and ice cream.

In Finland, particularly Uusimaa area, there are a lot of food trucks. However, most of them sell hamburgers, hot dogs and grilled food; there are only a few trucks which sell sweet. Therefore Taiyaki Go is gradually creating their own brand in customer's heart. With fish shape, Taiyaki Go brings customers the unfamiliarity in the familiar waffles.

According to the owner, Taiyaki Go is the first food truck selling that kind of snack in Finland. Their target customers are people who are tired after long day working and need some sweet to recover their energy. The best seller dish is the traditional version filled with red bean and nutella version.

### 6.2.2 Interview analysis

The first and most important thing to be considered and prepared before establishing a food truck, according to the owner of Taiyaki Go, is the location. She said that no matter what you were selling, the location decided more than 50% of the success. Her best location is in the heart of the center, where a lot of people passing all day. After parking at the center for a month, Taiyaki Go has increased their income by 1.5% compared to the old place at Iso Omena.

The second to be thought carefully in advance is the sales purpose. If the aim is to get profit, the selling product could be the common food and drinks such as burgers, hot dog etc. On the other hand, if the purpose is to develop and expand the business, the product should be more attractive and unfamiliar to people in that place. That was the reason why Taiyaki Go chose to sell Japanese waffles. The next to be prepared is the capital, personnel, opening time.

The best thing of owning a food truck, in the owner's opinion, is the small capital. She revealed that her 2 trucks took approximately €25 000 to establish, because a food truck does not require a big venue for customers to stay while enjoying their meals. Therefore a food trucker does not need to invest in any furniture but modern kitchen equipment. With the fish-shaped waffles, Taiyaki Go succeeded in winning their customers hearts and as a result getting back the free and most effective marketing method: word-of-mouth. The truck is becoming more and more popular thanks to the photos of fish waffles their customers posting on their pages.

However, there are many other factors that may affect the food truck business, for example electricity and water supplies, weather, traffic etc. As a new food truck, Taiyaki Go has faced a lot of struggle in which the biggest one is the personnel issue. The business was first run by 2 owners for 3 months before the second truck was opened. Since then, they have 2 permanent workers including owners and 2 part-time staff working on 2 Taiyaki Go trucks. Driving license is also a problem as hiring a driver could increase the costs.

The consistency of the food is also mentioned in the interview with the owner of Taiyaki Go. In her words, the taste of everything must be at least the same at the beginning, which means it could be better but should not be worse. For any food providers, it is important to make customers want to come back. Hence, the flavor should change in positive direction as they can taste the differences among their dishes.

Restaurants	Food trucks
Big capital	Small capital
Furniture investment	Few tables and chairs
Spacious place	Small venue
Limit in numbers of customers	Take away
Difficulty in renting business premises	Ease of moving around
Stability	Instability

Table 3: Differences between establishing a restaurant and owning a food truck.



There is a big gap between running a food truck and opening a restaurant. The differences are shown in the Table 3. While a restaurant requires a big amount of capital to establish, food truckers need only a small initial investment to open a food truck. Besides, due to a spacious space a restaurant needs, there is a demand in furniture investment and it would take a big amount of money. Moreover, food provided by food trucks are usually easy to enjoy while walking, so there is no need to have many tables and chairs but a few. It also allows food trucks to serve more people at a time than restaurants. On the other hand, restaurants ensure stable working environment and permanent customers, which food trucks could not as they have to move around.

Since the product of the writer's food truck is Japanese pancakes, which is not familiar to Finnish, the owner of Taiyaki Go gave an advice of establishing a small food truck, instead of a restaurant, in order to test the food first whether it is suitable or not. It is still acceptable if the business is not going well thanks to the small capital and investment. If it is a success, expanding more food trucks or moving into a restaurant could be the next step to consider about. Beside a good plan, it is important to gather enough, or better more than enough, money for unexpected situations. Finland, particularly Uusima area in her perception, is opening up to other foreign cultures, leading to more opportunities for entrepreneurs who have some unique ideas.

### 6.3 Observation method

Observation is a qualitative research method which is becoming more popular recently. The aim of observation is to gain first-hand insights into behaviors, processes and experiences. Observation is a process where observers can watch participants completing a task rather than talk about it to understand clearly what is really going on during working progress, which is the key advantage of this research method. In fact, people are not willing to reveal their true point of view on the subject in the interview with strangers. In some cases, observation is a better choice to access to people in their real life situations, which is good for explaining meaning and context. (University of Portsmouth 2012.)

In contrast, observation is not always a solution for every circumstance. It can be a subjective view if relates to culture or believes. Besides, observation might take lots of time to conduct, depending on the role of researchers. (University of Portsmouth 2012.). Table 4 below points out the advantages and disadvantages of observation research method.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to situations and people where questionnaires and interviews are im-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be viewed as too subjective.</li> <li>• Time consuming.</li> </ul>

<p>possible or are inappropriate to use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to people in real life situations.</li> <li>• Good for explaining meaning and context.</li> <li>• Can be strong on validity and in-depth understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on the role of researchers.</li> <li>• Overt: may affect the situation and thus validity of findings.</li> <li>• Covert: ethical principles contravened.</li> <li>• High potential for role conflict for practitioner researchers.</li> </ul>
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Table 4: Advantages and disadvantages of observation method (University of Portsmouth 2012).

As mentioned above, the result of observation depends on the role of researchers. Observation is divided into 4 main methods: participant observation, structured observation, internet-mediated observation and observation using videography. In this project, the participant observation was conducted through Restaurant day.

Participant observation is an approach that allows the researcher to participate in or closely observe the lives and activities of those whom they are studying. It is used to attempt to get to the root of 'what is going on'; in a wide range of social settings. Four types of participant observation are distinguished by two separate dimensions: whether the researcher's identity is revealed or concealed and the extent to which the researcher participates in the activities being observed. These four types of observation lead to roles that are labeled: complete participant; complete observer; observer-as-participant; participant-as-observer. Participant observation has high ecological validity but may be affected by observer error, observer drift, observer bias and observer effects. These issues may be minimized or overcome by observer familiarization, interpretive rigor, informant verification, habituation and the observer using strategies to explore and validate interpretations. Using these strategies can allow the benefits of gaining intricate and rich data to prevail over concerns about unreliable data. (Flick 2014, 299-300.)

### 6.3.1 Practical implementation: Restaurant day

Restaurant day takes place four times a year in Finland in which everybody regardless backgrounds or education could take part in selling food without permission. Taking the chance of the free event, authors try to test the potential of the idea. It was not only to introduce the product to customers but the more important goal was to observe the reaction and get feedbacks from clients.

In order to have the best preparation, authors planned to practice one month prior to the chosen restaurant day which was in 18th of November. Making previous of samples was the

dominant phase to refine the taste. In addition, the goals are to observing interaction of buyers and getting immediate feedbacks from them.



Figure 9: Okonomiyaki plate made by authors.

The main product was Okonomiyaki, a traditional yet flexible dish that could be found in Japan. There are two common types of Okonomiyaki: Hiroshima and Osaka and in this case, it is the Osaka one that was chosen. It contains of batter base, sliced cabbage mixed together egg while the filling is more vibrant with shrimp or bacon for savory and mushroom for vegetarians; finishing with mayonnaise, okonomiyaki sauce and fish flake on top (Figure 9).

The development process for the product took place in the middle of October. First attempt was to try to make one complete Okonomiyaki from the reliable cuisine recipe. In addition, in order to demonstrate the closest genuine level, the dish was made of genuine and original ingredients.

	Quantity	Unit	Price/ unit	Total
<b>1. Transportation</b>				€ 45.00
Gas	30	liter	€ 1.50	€ 45.00
<b>2. Packaging</b>				€ 7.09
Take away box	0.5	62 kpl	€ 8.49	€ 4.25
Take away bag	0.5		€ 3.41	€ 1.71
Spoon	0.5	50 kpl	€ 2.27	€ 1.14

<b>3. Ingredients</b>				<b>€ 101.43</b>
Bacon	7	140g bag	€ 0.97	€ 6.79
Oil	1	liter	€ 1.49	€ 1.49
Eggs	3	10 eggs tray	€ 1.40	€ 4.20
Ready-mixed okonomiyaki flour	2	kg	€ 20.00	€ 40.00
Cabbage	4	kg	€ 0.24	€ 0.96
Baking powder	0.5	100g bottle	€ 0.98	€ 0.49
Okonomiyaki sauce	2	bottle	€ 10.00	€ 20.00
Bonito flakes	1	50g bag	€ 8.00	€ 8.00
Mayonnaise	2	500g bottle	€ 5.00	€ 10.00
Aonori (dried seaweed powder)	1	100g bag	€ 3.50	€ 3.50
Spring onions	3	bunch	€ 2.00	€ 6.00
<b>4. Misc</b>				<b>€ 5.00</b>
<b>Out flow</b>				<b>€ 158.52</b>
Net price per portion	50	kpl	€ 3.17	
Profit	50%		€ 1.59	
<b>Selling price</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>kpl</b>	<b>€ 4.76</b>	

Table 5: Expected selling price version 1.

As can be seen in Table 5, the writers tried to make the Okonomiyaki as close to the original one as possible. For that reason, an authentic Japanese market seemed to be a good choice. Ready-mixed okonomiyaki flour was bought in order to make the authentic taste of this pancake. It took approximately 30 minutes to prepare all ingredients and only 10 minutes to make one portion. The expected selling price according to total cost is 4.76€ (Table 5), excluding electricity, water and other expenses. However, when electricity, water, office expense and other costs are calculated, the price will increase so that the profit could not be as much as expected. Therefore the authors decided to replace some ingredients into cheaper ones but tried to keep the same flavor as the original.

	Quantity	Unit	Price/ unit	Total
<b>1. Transportation</b>				<b>€ 45.00</b>
Gas	30	liter	€ 1.50	€ 45.00
<b>2. Packaging</b>				<b>€ 7.09</b>

Take away box	0.5	62 kpl	€ 8.49	€ 4.25
Take away bag	0.5		€ 3.41	€ 1.71
Spoon	0.5	50 kpl	€ 2.27	€ 1.14
<b>3. Ingredients</b>				<b>€ 66.92</b>
Bacon	7	140g bag	€ 0.97	€ 6.79
Oil	1	liter	€ 1.49	€ 1.49
Sugar	0.5	kg	€ 0.59	€ 0.30
Oyster sauce	0.5	kg	€ 4.50	€ 2.25
Ketchup	1	kg	€ 0.75	€ 0.75
Worcestershire sauce	0.5	liter	€ 10.35	€ 5.18
Eggs	3	10 eggs tray	€ 1.40	€ 4.20
Fish powder	1	stick	€ 1.35	€ 1.35
Yam	1	kg	€ 8.85	€ 8.85
Flour	2	kg	€ 0.26	€ 0.52
Cabbage	4	kg	€ 0.24	€ 0.96
Baking powder	0.5	100g bottle	€ 0.98	€ 0.49
Bonito flakes	2	50g bag	€ 8.00	€ 16.00
Mayonnaise	2	500g bottle	€ 5.00	€ 10.00
Aonori	1	20g bag	€ 3.80	€ 3.80
Spring onions	2	bunch	€ 2.00	€ 4.00
<b>4. Misc</b>				<b>€ 5.00</b>
<b>Out flow</b>				<b>€ 124.01</b>
Net price per portion	50	kpl	€ 2.48	
Profit	50%		€ 1.24	
<b>Selling price</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>kpl</b>	<b>€ 3.72</b>	

Table 6: Expected selling price version 2.

Coming to version 2, the writers tried to mix all-purpose flour with some salt, sugar and fish powder to prepare the batter. Besides, the ready-made okonomiyaki sauce is quite washy but expensive, so it seems to be better to make by ourselves to reduce the price. Moreover, it is also easier to add more seasoning in order to enrich the taste. The changes help to reduce selling price to 3.72€ per portion (Table 6).

### 6.3.2 Restaurant day

On the restaurant day of November 18<sup>th</sup>, a tent was borrowed to give a good preparation for the testing day (Figure 10). The food was prepared and cooked right in front of customers after they ordered and paid. The feedback from customers was carried out based on the taste of food, the idea, the service and their experience of having the dish. Some criteria chosen to evaluate the possibility of the food are the size of a portion, the decoration, the freshness and taste of the food, etc. Moreover, it is important to know what customers think of the food truck concept in the future. In addition, the customers' experiences are also taken into account by being asked about the serving style, timing and their satisfaction.



Figure 10: Preparation on restaurant day.

As mentioned above, restaurant day is a day when everybody can sell food without permission, which means no tax is needed. In total, 122 portions were sold at the price of 5€ per unit. The net income was 610€ while all the costs were 302.03€. As a result, the profit was 307.97€ which took possession of 50.49% of the net income. The detailed statistics table is shown in Table 7.

	Quantity	Unit	Price/ unit	Total
<i>1. Transportation</i>				€ 174.99
Gas	26.86	liter	€ 1.49	€ 39.99
	10.28	liter	€ 1.46	€ 15.00
Parking fine	2	ticket	€ 60.00	€ 120.00

<b>2. Packaging</b>				€ 14.17
Take away box	1	125 kpl	€ 8.49	€ 8.49
Take away bag	1		€ 3.41	€ 3.41
Spoon	1	100 kpl	€ 2.27	€ 2.27
<b>3. Ingredients</b>				€ 111.87
Bacon	15	140g bag	€ 0.97	€ 14.55
Oil	2	liter	€ 1.49	€ 2.98
Sugar	1	kg	€ 0.59	€ 0.59
Oyster sauce	1	kg	€ 4.50	€ 4.50
Ketchup	2	kg	€ 0.75	€ 1.50
Worcestershire sauce	1	liter	€ 10.35	€ 10.35
Eggs	5	10 eggs tray	€ 1.40	€ 7.00
Fish powder	1	stick	€ 1.35	€ 1.35
Yam	2	kg	€ 8.85	€ 17.70
Flour	4	kg	€ 0.26	€ 1.04
Cabbage	7	kg	€ 0.24	€ 1.68
Baking powder	1	100g bottle	€ 0.98	€ 0.98
Bonito flakes	1	200g bag	€ 20.05	€ 20.05
Mayonnaise	4	500g bottle	€ 5.00	€ 20.00
Aonori	2	20g bag	€ 3.80	€ 7.60
Spring onions	0	free		€ -
<b>4. Misc</b>				€ 1.00
Trash bag	1	10 kpl	€ 1.00	€ 1.00
<b>Out flow</b>				€ 302.03
<b>In flow</b>	122	kpl	€ 5.00	€ 610.00
<b>Profit</b>				€ 307.97
				50.49%

Table 7: Practical selling price with details on Restaurant day.

Thanks to the restaurant day, the real-life difficulties and challenges in real working environment were realized and would be given more attention in the future. The most challenging problem of establishing a food court or food truck, in the writers' opinion, is electricity and water supplies. Besides, the communication plays a key role in the whole process, among

front-line staffs, servers and cooks. During the day, the authors learnt how to face the problems and find solutions through some misunderstandings and unexpected events.



Figure 11: Selling portion on restaurant day.

On the testing day, the collected response from customers was positive. Nearly 90% of clients said that they had interest in this kind of food, especially in winter time. More than 30% suggested having seafood toppings and vegan version for those who could not eat meat and poultry while the rest of them enjoyed the savory version (Figure 11). Additionally, Japanese culture and cuisine is becoming more popular in Finland nowadays; therefore people tend to look for Japanese restaurants or food trucks. Hence the idea of opening a food truck which sells Okonomiyaki - a Japanese pizza - is optimistic and practical.

## 7 Daruma food truck's business plan

To smoothly start off the business, a general business plan has been sketched out for Daruma. Based on experiences of the owners themselves and with the help of practical implementation through different research methodologies, the writers are able to bring a complete plan to the table. It will not only play a role as a final outcome of this thesis but also is an actual reference supporting owner's business in the future. The detailed business plan can be seen in **Error! Reference source not found..**



## 8 Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to create a practical business plan for an upcoming food truck of the writers. Consequently, the outcome of this thesis is a business plan for a Japanese food truck named 'Daruma'. Hence the goal of the thesis has been accomplished. The process of writing this thesis and business plan is a valuable achievement for the authors. During the progress, it is essential to think as an entrepreneur and estimate and calculate all numbers as precisely as possible. Additionally, since the business is open in Finnish market, it is compulsory to follow Finnish rules and comprehend Finnish business environment.

The theory background of entrepreneurship and the process of establishing a new business in general and particularly in Finland were revised. Moreover, the differences between opening a new restaurants and setting up a new food truck is also pointed out.

Japanese cuisine is famous as a culinary art which emphasizes the freshness of ingredients, the delicacy of the food and the decoration techniques. The Japanese people do not use much seasoning in their food but it does not mean that their dishes are plain and tasteless. On the contrary, the food has a rich flavor as a result of the combination of natural ingredients. Furthermore, the quantity in Japanese cuisine is not focused, but the quality of the dishes, decoration techniques and ingredient mixtures is given careful attention in order to create attractive and delicious meals. However, traditional Japanese cuisine has not yet expanded in Finnish market, except sushi. That is the reason why the authors decided to establish a food business which sells one of the traditional Japanese dishes called Okonomiyaki or Japanese pizza.

There are many reasons for which a food truck was chosen to be opened instead of a new restaurant. In the first place, with small capital in investment for a food truck, the authors wanted to test the potential of this thesis idea since the concept is quite new for Finnish. Secondly, the food truck only offers Okonomiyaki and some drinks in the beginning period, which is more suitable for take-away business model. Some other dishes could be added later if this concept is accepted and runs smoothly. Conversely, driving license can be one of the most challenging problems for the writers since the price will increase if a driver is hired.

Qualitative research method, particularly semi-structured interview and observation, was conducted to collect practical data as the reference numbers and situations. The interview was accomplished with the Vietnamese owner of Taiyaki Go who have ran the food truck business selling Japanese deserts in the center of Helsinki for almost a year. The knowledge gained during the interview brought the authors some useful tips when establishing a food truck in Finnish market as well as their demand of Japanese food.

Observation method was carried out through restaurant day on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this observation was to evaluate the practicability of the upcoming food truck. Most of the feedback from customers was positive, which indicated the potential sign of the thesis idea. Some of them also had suggestions on how to develop the taste and topping choices, which would be taken into account. Generally, in spite of all difficulties and challenges, everything was managed well on the restaurant day. This experience with real numbers and real customers can be seen as a precious lesson for the writers in the future business.

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## Figures

Figure 1: Timmons Models of Entrepreneurship (Zacharakis et al. 2011). .....	4
Figure 2: Disney Theme Park in Ohio Florida (Platimumtravel 2015). .....	6
Figure 3: The Big Five domains and entrepreneurial personality (Brookes & Altinay 2015, 12). .....	7
Figure 4: Slush event in Helsinki (Slush 2017). .....	10
Figure 5: Required documents for different forms of enterprise (Finnish Enterprise Agencies 2016). .....	11
Figure 6: Restaurant day in Kallion Herkut, Helsinki (Sarparanta 2011). .....	13
Figure 7: Osaka Okonomiyaki vs Hiroshima Okonomiyaki (Jenjenk 2010). .....	20
Figure 8: Taiyaki Go food truck. ....	27
Figure 9: Okonomiyaki plate made by authors. ....	31
Figure 10: Preparation on restaurant day. ....	34
Figure 11: Selling portion on restaurant day. ....	36
Figure 12: Daruma logo. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 13: Daruma initial menu. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 14: Customer segmentation. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 15: Board Management Team. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 16: Daruma marketing flyer. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 17: BMC of Daruma .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## Tables

Table 1: SWOT analysis of food truck. ....	17
Table 2: Content of a business plan (Zacharakis et al. 2011, 46-53). ....	23
Table 3: Differences between establishing a restaurant and owning a food truck. ....	28
Table 4: Advantages and disadvantages of observation method (University of Portsmouth 2012). ....	30
Table 5: Expected selling price version 1. ....	32
Table 6: Expected selling price version 2. ....	33
Table 7: Practical selling price with details on Restaurant day. ....	35
Table 8: Competitive analysis. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 9: SWOT analysis. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 10: Majority of investment. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 11: Predicted monthly gross sales. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 12: Predicted monthly and annual profit. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>



Appendices

Appendix 1: Case interview ..... 46  
Appendix 2: Business plan ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix 1: Case interview

Date: 30/1/2018

Case: Taiyaki Go food truck

Questionnaires:

1. Can you introduce about yourself and your food truck?
2. What inspired you to open a food truck?
3. What are the most important things to consider when preparing a food truck?
4. Where is your favorite location? Why?
5. In your opinion, what can be the best and worst things of owning a food truck?
6. What is the biggest struggle you have faced as a new food trucker?
7. How is opening a food truck different from establishing a restaurant?
8. What will you advise a newbie on owning himself or herself a food truck?

