

LAB University of Applied Sciences  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality  
Degree Programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management

Lieu Gia Hung

# **On Authenticity and Adaptation of Vietnamese Cuisine in Finland: Project Nam**

Thesis 2020

## **Abstract**

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Instructors: Mr. Jukka Moilanen, Senior Lecturer, LAB University of Applied Sciences

Ms. Virpi Ristimäki, LAB University of Applied Sciences

With the positive growth in number of ethnic restaurants in Finland, the Finns are getting more open to new tastes and cuisines. The purposes of this research were to find out the opinions of Finnish people about authentic Vietnamese dishes and necessary adjustments to adapt to their taste. The research could be used for further study or as reference for businesses and entrepreneurs interested in the same matter.

Theoretical data for this thesis was collected from culinary blogs, websites, books, and previous studies on related topics. Then a project was implemented, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected by questionnaire method. There were two questionnaires in total, the first one to measure the popularity of Vietnamese food before the workshop and the other after the sample had experienced cooking and tasting it.

The result of this research shown that the majority of the respondents had not had previous experience with the cuisine but was interested in it after the workshop. They also commented on what they did not like, from which some points about necessary adaptation to better suit the Finnish taste were concluded.

Keywords: authenticity, adaptation, Vietnamese cuisine

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	4
1.1	Main Aims and Delimitations of the Thesis .....	4
1.2	Reason for Choosing the Topic .....	5
1.3	Structure of the Thesis .....	6
2	Finland's Recent Gastronomy Picture .....	6
2.1	Ethnic Food Background in Finland .....	6
2.2	Vietnamese Food in Finland .....	7
3	Vietnamese Cuisine .....	8
3.1	Background Influences .....	9
3.2	Culinary Philosophies .....	9
3.3	Main Cookings .....	10
3.3.1	Northern Region .....	10
3.3.2	Central Region .....	11
3.3.3	Southern Region .....	11
3.3.4	Other Cookings .....	12
4	Authenticity and Adaptation .....	13
4.1	Authenticity .....	13
4.2	Realms of Culinary Experience .....	14
4.3	Adjusting Realms - Adaptation .....	15
5	The Research .....	17
5.1	Research Methodology .....	17
5.2	<i>Project: Nam</i> .....	19
5.3	Data Collection Method .....	22
5.4	Validity and Reliability .....	23
6	Results Analysis .....	24
6.1	Preliminary questions .....	24
6.1.1	Previous Knowledges and Experiences .....	25
6.1.2	Expectations .....	25
6.2	Opinions and Suggestions .....	26
6.3	Summary .....	30
7	Conclusions and Recommendations .....	31
7.1	Exoticness, Edibility and Palatability of Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine .....	32
7.2	Adaptation to Finnish Taste .....	33
8	Evaluations .....	35
9	Figures .....	36
10	Bibliography .....	37
	Appendixes	

# 1 Introduction

This thesis research studies the extent of Vietnamese dishes authenticity that Finns would accept by organizing a workshop that introduces the lesser-known Vietnamese food dishes to a student audience of the course “Food Production” with the support of LAB University of Applied Sciences (UAS). In other word, how much similar that diners in Finland expect this foreign food to be as it is served in its country of origin. Following that, it was found out what and how adjustment can be made to adapt to the Finns tastes with the priority of keeping the closest to the original recipes from Vietnam. Ultimately, through better and more thoroughly understanding the expectations and palates of Finns to Vietnamese food, the author hopes to assess the possibility for the concept of a more authentic Vietnamese restaurant in Finland.

## 1.1 Main Aims and Delimitations of the Thesis

The main aims of the research are to collect Finnish diner opinions and to acquire data on necessary adjustment to adapt to their tastes.

The research problem of this thesis is “Are the Finns interested in authentic Vietnamese food?”, which leads to the research questions:

- What do they like about this cooking?
- What do they dislike about this cooking?
- Do they think that adjustments are necessary? If yes, then what are these adjustments?

To answer these questions, an action research is used, under the name of *Project: Nam*, a project in which participating students will join cooking the food for a pop-up restaurant event then taste them later. During the project process, questionnaire with focus on qualitative data is the data collection method.

The first delimitation of this research is the small main sample, which makes the project feasible and possible, and facilitates qualitative data collection. The second delimitation. The second delimitation is the focus of authenticity. Regarding

authenticity in ethnic cuisine restaurants; marketing plans, exterior and interior decorations are among the main influent factors. However, the thesis would only focus on the culinary aspect. The third limitation is in the menu selection strategy, which will be discussed in a later chapter. The menu dishes are planned based on conventional ingredients throughout Vietnamese. Therefore, products the edibility and palatability of which are still questionable in modern Vietnam society, or products that do not represent the country's cuisine such as dog meat, rat meat, ballut eggs, etc. are not parts of the research questions.

## **1.2 Reason for Choosing the Topic**

With passion for different cuisines built from travelling experiences and thoughts of operating an ethnic cuisine restaurant in Finland in the future, the author has visited many ethnic restaurants in Finland to study the market, mostly in Metropolitan area, due to the larger options than other regions. The secondary reason is to comfort the homesickness as dining out is almost a daily norm in Asian countries like Vietnam, in every course from breakfast to midnight supper. However, what the author has noticed dining at some ethnic restaurants here is that the same cuisine under different roofs can be highly different. These restaurants usually lack food options that the author is familiar with; and ingredients and preparation methods are sometimes not what the author has experienced before. The point that ethnic cuisines were exotic to the local customers when they were first introduced so restaurants have to adapt to their familiar tastes, has been taken. However, diners in Finland are currently getting more and more open to different ethnic food and seeking new and exotic tastes more actively. As outbound tourism is also on the rise, travelling abroad has also introduced the Finns to foreign and exotic food that has many differences. From these new developments, the author finds it an urge to understand the authenticity extent that is accepted by the customers and their general tastes to identify the possibility of a more authentic ethnic cuisine, Vietnamese in specific, restaurant in Finland as well as to gather more experience in kitchen organizing and menu planning for his future career in the food and beverage business.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis will discuss firstly in chapter 2 the current picture of ethnic food, Vietnamese included, in Finland. Secondly, general information about the cuisine of Vietnam is provided in chapter 3. Then theories about the term authenticity, the Realms of Culinary Experience and the adaptation based on negotiating these realms are discussed in chapter 4. Following that, details about the research and its results are analyzed in chapters 5 and 6. Penultimately, in chapter 7, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn from this analysis. The final chapter is the author's self-evaluation about the research as a whole.

## **2 Finland's Recent Gastronomy Picture**

### **2.1 Ethnic Food Background in Finland**

According to Long (2004), ethnicity is a dynamic cultural construct and one of the most obvious methods to distinguish food systems. The identity of ethnic is based on perceptions of shared heritage and of living within a dominant host culture (Oring 1986, cited in Long 2004, p.24). Kwon (2015) explains, in a narrow sense, that ethnic foods are defined as foods originating from a heritage and culture of an ethnic group who use their knowledge of local ingredients of plants and/or animal sources; and in a broader sense, ethnic food can be defined as an ethnic group's or a country's cuisine that is culturally and socially accepted by consumers outside of the respective ethnic group.

Due to the harsh climate, fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs were largely unavailable; spices other than salt were also limited in Finland (Swallow 2011, p.140). Therefore, traditional Finnish cuisine surrounded preserved food, such as cured salmon or pickled vegetables. Nonetheless, with time, more food became available and affordable as can be seen today. With that regards, the Finns have also developed a taste for international cuisine (Swallow 2011 p.151.) Andersson (n.d.) in *Discovering Finland* states that oranges were once new and exotic in Finland in the 1930s, and pizza in the 1960s. She continues that in the late 1990s in Helsinki, foods that involved chopsticks were the newest of the new, and the establishments serving them are mainly a handful of Chinese and one Japanese

restaurants. Nowadays, ethnic restaurant options are offered almost throughout the country, and are not limited to only sushi and pizza anymore. These days, in Helsinki alone there are over a hundred ethnic restaurants, including thirteen Japanese, twenty-six Indian, forty-three Chinese, eight Nepalese, and six Thai restaurants (Discovering Finland n.d.). In addition, diners in the country's capital can now find cuisines from many other lesser-known parts of the world, namely Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Korea, Cambodia, etc. Even a small town like Imatra, one can already find two Chinese, one Nepalese and numerous kebab restaurants and pizzerias. These numbers indicate that there is a growth in Finnish diners' interest in and demand for foreign food country wise.

## **2.2 Vietnamese Food in Finland**

To evaluate the potential of Vietnamese restaurants in Vaasa area of Finland, there has been a study in Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) among its Finnish students and staff about tastes preference of Finns towards Vietnamese and Thai food. Even though the research is conducted in 2013, up to 71% responded that they have tried Vietnamese food (Dinh 2013).

In this research, there is a high percentage of interest in using of herbs such as basil, fresh mint and coriander in Southeast Asian food. Among the traditional ingredients, rice is the most received while tofu is the least. Also in this study, saltiness and bitterness seem not to be remarkable in the food for Finns, especially bitterness. Fish sauce, a traditional ingredient in many recipes, does not quite fit the Finnish taste. The result concluded that Finnish people do have knowledge and interest in Vietnamese cuisine even though the majority of them have never been to the country; and Vietnamese dishes were not popular and well-known at the time, but those who had previous experiences, showed positive attitudes towards them. (Dinh 2013.)

Also according to a business plan for a fusion Vietnamese restaurant in 2017, Vietnamese was still a new trend in Metropolitan area with a handful of restaurants serving similar dishes (Heino & Nguyen, 2017). Thus, it is worth assessing the possibility for a restaurant serving a more diversified menu, besides the generic dishes have been so far well introduced.

### 3 Vietnamese Cuisine

A basic Vietnamese meal, which is served shared in a group of family or friends, consists of steamed white rice (*com*), the staple of food and different food dishes, usually one protein dish (*món mặn*), one vegetable dish (*món rau*) and a clear soup (*canh*), accompanied by a small bowl of soups, highlighted by some picklings and dipping sauces. The desserts Vietnamese usually have after meals are usually fruits, jelly and *Chè*, a Vietnamese sweet soup or beverage with countless variations and ingredients, which can be served hot or with ice.



Figure 1: Typical family meal (Baomoi 2019)



### 3.1 Background Influences

Vietnam is a country with a long warfare history, throughout the years of expansion, foreign domination and colonization, different ingredients as well as culinary skills have mingled with indigenous tastes to create the nowadays Vietnamese cuisine (Chung 1999). Being colonized by China and France throughout the course of its history, the cooking of Vietnam is largely influenced by these two cuisines, take using of chopsticks, wok, soya sauce or baking for examples. In addition, coconut milk, curry powder, five-spice powder and oyster sauce are also Hindu influences from the expansion towards the southern territory (Fisher 2011, p.328.)

Geographically, Vietnam is has tropical climate, thus the abundance in fresh herbs and vegetables choices for cooking. With a large amount in scale of rivers and a long coastline along the country, fish has been one of the main protein sources in a family meal, besides rice. Meat proteins such as chicken, beef and pork have become more common these days since economy has started to grow. For historical and economical backgrounds, the Vietnamese had recipes for most parts of the animals, which leaves very few or no parts left, thus the birth of dishes like *Phá lấu*, a stew of pork or beef organ meats. As similar to Thai and other Southeast Asian cuisine, the practice of fermenting fish and crustaceans to make uniquely pungent dipping sauces can be seen throughout cookings of different regions in the country. Among them, fish sauce (*nước mắm*), a salty and liquid sauce made from fermented anchovies, is the soul of many dishes. Depending on the dish it goes with, *nước mắm* can be served differently, either naked, simply with finely chopped chillies or mixed with lime juice, garlic, chillies, and sugar, or as ingredient in the cooking process. Another widely used fermented product is shrimp paste, made from crushed small shrimps fermented for weeks. This paste will be featured in one of the main dishes served in the pop-up restaurant.

### 3.2 Culinary Philosophies

Vietnamese food generally has the balance of hot spices, fat, fresh herbs and vegetables; which might be the reason why it is considered one of the healthiest cuisines according to CNN. As similar to Chinese cooking, the cuisine of Vietnam

also surrounds itself in the philosophy of *yin* and *yang*, the cooling and heating elements of food, which contradict but also support each other. For example, fish is considered cool, so it can be stewed with ingredients with warm element, such as ginger. Moreover, the cooking of Vietnamese follows another philosophy according to the theory of *yin* and *yang* called the *Five elements*, which includes water, fire, wood, earth and metal. The five basic spices: spicy, sour, bitter, salty and sweet and five colors in a dish: red, white, green, yellow and black are in accordance with these five elements. In traditional Vietnamese cuisine, a good meal is a meal consisting of the combination of these characteristics. The following of harmony in these two disciplines make the cuisine stands out.

### **3.3 Main Cookings**

For a relatively small country in Southeast Asia, Vietnam has a diverse cooking and characterized by regions and ethnicities. Generally, the cuisine can be categorized into three regional sub-cuisines:

#### **3.3.1 Northern Region**

The cooking in the north takes the philosophy of Yin yang and Five elements to heart. The result is the harmony and balance of tastes, full of flavors but subtle in all. Dishes here are considered the less spicy than its two other counterparts for it does not go to extreme in any specific flavour. Black pepper and ginger replace chillies to bring the heat in northern food (Fisher 2011, p.328). Northern Vietnam is also the region that has the largest cooking influence from China. The national dish that brought Vietnamese food worldwide -Phở, is exemplary for its similarities sharing with the Chinese noodles beef soup, with twists and local adjustments, of course, to make it the special dish of its own country. Another influence is the use of MSG (Monosodium glutamate). The nominatable dishes from this region is Phở, a warm soup base of rice noodles with chicken or beef and Bánh Cuốn, a dish of thin salty rice pancake rolls with meat and mushroom fillings inside.

### 3.3.2 Central Region

In general, dishes are earthy and spicier because of the use of ground chilies. This regional cooking consists of the mountainous, coastal and *Huế* cookings. The mountainous cooking relies on grilling and fermenting methods with a uniquely strong and salty flavor while the coastal cooking is mild on flavors and focuses on the natural sweet taste of the fresh seafood ingredients. *Huế* cooking is a cuisine of its own, for the city was once home to the capital of the old Imperial Vietnam. Dishes here are considered spicier, more sophisticated, well portioned decorated and presented (Fisher 2011, p.328). Two famous dishes from the Central are *Bún bò Huế*, a beef shank soup with rice vermicelli specialty of *Huế* city that is spicier and hotter than the northern *Phở*; and *Mì Quảng*, a variation of rice noodles with meat or seafood served with a small amount of broth.

### 3.3.3 Southern Region

The hotter and more humid climate leads to the abundance of tropical fruits and herbs. Southern food is easily recognized for its generosity in fresh herbs usage and sweetness. It is believed that the Southern Vietnamese uses sugar to substitute the umami that comes from MSG in the North. It is easy to see these characteristics in the southern *Phở* bowl, in which the broth is sweeter than the mild Northern *Phở* and with many fresh herbs like basil, coriander and many more. The region is seen to use more garlic, turmeric, curry and coconut milk in food than the other two. (Fisher 2011, p.328.) Areas located in the Mekong delta have large amounts of dishes from freshwater fish. Southern cooking is more influenced by French cuisine than the other two. The nowadays trendy *Bánh Mì*, a baguette sandwich with cold cuts, sausages, cucumber, pickled root vegetables and herbs, is the best example of this influence. Other influences can be seen in the use of macaroni, liver paté, and butter in many dishes. The signature dishes of the South is *Cơm Tấm*, literally meaning broken rice, is a dish of cooked fractured rice grain topped with fillings like grilled pork ribs, Chinese sausages or sunny side up fried eggs and *Bún Thịt Nướng*, a rice vermicelli dish of grilled pork and spring rolls served with different types of herbs.

### 3.3.4 Other Cookings

Besides these three main cooking schools, vegetarian food and modern street food are also regarded as Vietnamese sub-cuisines.

In recent decades, the Vietnamese vegetarian food, which originated from the Mahayana Buddhism vegetarian beliefs, sees a trend of using fake meats to substitute normal meat dishes such as *Beijing* duck, chicken drumsticks, beef shanks, shrimps and fish.

In Vietnam, food from quick bites to belly-full meals can be found on the streets. Vietnamese food stalls varying in size, are located in every street corner, from the street sidewalks to small alleys (Chung 1999). Lacking serving space but hardly creativity, these roadside food sellers are authors of many urban snacks and adopters of the latest food trends, for example, *Bánh tráng nướng*, the so-called “Vietnamese Pizza”.



Figure 2: Vietnamese Pizza (Wandercooks 2019)

## 4 Authenticity and Adaptation

### 4.1 Authenticity

Authenticity measures the degree to which something is more or less what it ought to be (Molz 2004, as cited in Appadurai, 1986, p.54). From this definition, authenticity is objective and exact. To put it in the context of cuisine and culinary, Food Fraud Advisors (n.d.) claims that authentic food is food that exactly meets its description and also meets a person's reasonable assumption of its character. To support this viewpoint, Sokolov (2013) also described the authenticity of an ethnic dish as a duplicate of the dish from its place of origin that he had had and a culinary purity that had evolved over the ages, a preserved lasting tradition. Monaco (2017) argues that authentic means different things to different people

and the authenticity of a given dish, restaurant, or chef is based on the assumption that some ways of preparing food are more authentic than others. Authenticity, in this case, has the factor of subjectivity; for it is also measured by one's assumption, which is constructed through various channels such as books, experiences, media and many more. The definition of authenticity provided by Sokolov is the most suitable for this thesis, which can be summarized as a standard of food that show how similar it is to its original counterpart. However, it is not an objective standard, since consumers might have different tastes, backgrounds and experiences, which affect their judgements. For *Project: Nam*, the author uses recipes and cooking methods which are based on his own background, previous experiences, exposures from the home country: Vietnam, replicating them as close as possible to convey authenticity to the food. Thus, the term authenticity in this research will be used to describe food that is prepared with methods and ingredients without compromising Finnish customers' and market's taste as it is in current Vietnamese restaurants in Finland.

## **4.2 Realms of Culinary Experience**

The backbone-based theory for this whole thesis is from the Realms of Culinary Experience. It is used in the process of forming data collecting questions and analyzing their answers, as well as concluding findings. Long (2004, pp.32-34) introduces a coordinate axes known as The Realms of Culinary Experience, which consist of three different realms, namely the exotic, the edible and the palatable.

Long explains that the first realm is a continuum from the familiar to the strange defining the similarity of things to our known socially constructed universe, which is based on one's individual history and personal tastes as well as on the collective cultural experience and the generally accepted aesthetic of culinary.

Secondly, the edible realm comprises cultural categories of what can and cannot be eaten. Edibility is culturally specific, it can be a reflection of a culture's social structure.

Last but not least, the palatable is an aesthetic realm, which deals with what is considered pleasing within a culinary system. An edible food is to meet a certain

standard of being savory, appetizing and appropriate in order to be deemed palatable. It is a "shadow" realm of the edible, for they usually collapse by many. However, to differentiate them, edibility is about the possibility to be eaten while palatability touches on aesthetic, or what people want to eat.

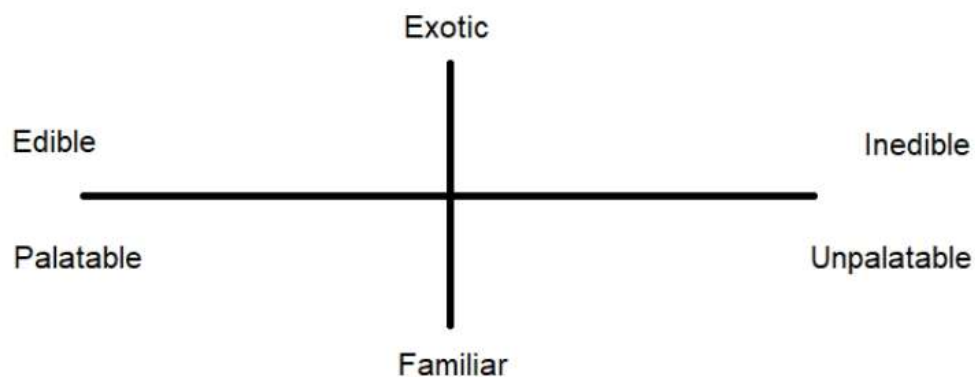


Figure 3. The Realms of Culinary Experience (Long 2004)

The boundaries for these realms are flexible and dynamic and can be shifted in any direction on these axes, for individuals' and society's perceptions of edibility and exoticness can shift. It can occur on an individual basis or on a larger scale as a regional or national trend, either informal or institutionalized; with aspects such as ingredient, particular dish, eating style, preparation method or entire cuisines. An example of this shift is, as stated by Long (2004, p.34), ten years before the publication of the book, which is estimatedly 1994, kiwi was a rarity in grocery stores in the Midwest of the USA but by the publication time, it has been common enough to be included in school lunches. Long also provides another instance, which is pizza. It was once an ethnic food questioned by its palatability, but has now become a common meal for Americans and lost much of its exoticness.

#### **4.3 Adjusting Realms - Adaptation**

These three realms are also a resource to be potentially manipulated for creative and economic ends. Long (2004, p. 36) refers to this maneuvering of these

realms as the negotiation with the needs, interests and aesthetics of all the actors involved. In this report the two main actors are the producer and the consumer, in which producers manipulate these realms in order to attract consumers (Long 2004, p. 36). She points out five basic strategies in realms negotiating, which are "framing, naming or translation, explication, menu selection and recipe adaptation." Because the first three strategies, including exterior and interior decorating, food list presenting, belong more to the services and restaurant operations, this report will focus only on the fourth and last strategies, which are menu selection and recipe adaptation.

Menu selection is, according to Long (2004, p.42), regarded as the most common strategy. This strategy depends on what, in the producers' cognition, are appeal to the customers. To implant such strategy, a producer has to know the tastes of the potential consumers as well as to choose which dishes best represent their cuisine (Long 2004, p. 42). For instance, most Chinese restaurants have wok or Kung Pao Chicken in their menu as these are already well-known in the west. Molz (2004, p.58) explains that certain animal parts are opposed to Americans way of eating, thus the abandoning of dishes including chicken internal organs or fish head to the Thai restaurants' menu. The same can be said for the exclusion of popular or traditional dishes but may be offensive to the local customers such as *balut egg* (a dish of boiled partly developed duck embryo) or *Organ meats stew* in Vietnamese restaurants' menu in Finland.

Recipe adaptation is about the adjustment of the ingredients and preparation methods so as to adapt to the consumers' tastes and aesthetics. In this regard, ingredients that are difficult to procure or perceived to be potentially unpalatable, or offensive to the anticipated consumers might be left out of the recipe or replaced by another similar or more familiar ones (Long 2004, p. 43). Molz (2004, pp.57-58) provides three examples, in which chefs have to prepare the dish in an unauthentic way to adapt to the tastes of the customer. Firstly, most Thai "authentic" restaurants in the USA do not serve the dish *kai dao* (fried rice with a fried egg) the traditional way. The reason that they omit the egg on top of the dish is because it does not appeal to most Western diners, thus adapt to the Western parameters of culinary acceptability. In the second example, Molz introduces to



a Thai restaurant's menu which provides their customers with options for spiciness degree; with the explanation that the spicier, the more authentic the dish is. However, the diners' choices are often the milder ones, thus requiring Thai restaurants to adapt their representation of authentically seasoned dishes to their customers' palates. Thirdly, she points out that local availability of ingredients can also affect the authenticity. For example, these restaurants often use ingredients that are more easily found in the United States, for example prepackaged frozen mixed vegetables instead of fresh ones in stir-fries, or American broccoli instead of Asian broccoli. According to the writer's observations, many Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki usually add European radish to their spring rolls or noodle salads. Since the ingredient itself is alien to the Vietnamese cuisine, it can be assumed that this ingredient addition is to attract Finnish customers, who are well familiar with this root vegetable.

Applying these two strategies to plan the menu for *Project: Nam*, the author avoids only ingredients that are generally offensive to Western diners such as organ meats, developing embryos, and exotic meats. To be adaptable to the market, the menu is also planned based on ingredients that are available in Finland.

## **5 The Research**

### **5.1 Research Methodology**

The objectives of this research are exploratory, for it is a study undertaken with the objective of exploring an area where little is known (Kumar 2014, p.13). The area of Finns' interest in lesser-known dishes of Vietnamese cuisine, which is not thoroughly investigated yet, fits this category. Overall, this research follows a fixed design, in which there is preliminary data collection at an early stage and a detailed plan started even before that (Robson 2007, p.22).

The research approach that the author opt for is action research. According to Robson (2007, p.23), action research is an approach that emphasizes the involvement of the researcher in a situation or practice, with a view to improving it. He also provides with advantages of this approach, which are giving a more ac-

tive role to participants, contributing to the researchers' professional and personal development, and providing a means of addressing and resolving practical problems. Some previous researches that the author has found were conducted only in the form of a survey. Thus, by being actively involved and allowing the respondents to cook and taste the food themselves during the data collection process, the author hopes to receive the answers in the most direct way, instead of by assumption or memory; as well as to understand more easily the adjustments that need to be made to the authentic recipes in practice. Moreover, directly involving in the food preparation also helps the author gain more experiences in the kitchen for his future career. Robson (2007, p.25) also discusses the disadvantages of this research approach, which include difficulty for novice researcher, in co-operation by participants and for researchers that are not "insiders"; these disadvantages also applied to this research. For this is a project in cooperation with LAB University of Applied Sciences, it has a certain degree of influence from the partner. For instance, the alignment between timetable of the course "Food Production" and the author's personal schedule, the modified idea of pop-up restaurant event, the ingredients choice made. Nonetheless, through discussions, changes and modifications to the original plan for the workshop were made for the better and yielding more perspectives for the research. Besides collecting and analyzing data, the author also has to organize and implementing the project instead of the initially planned common data research method, which is interviewing. However, as a student of LAB University of Applied Sciences, thus considered an "insider", it is not difficult to present to and look for collaboration from the university.

Stringer (2014, pp.8-9) describes the basic routine of an action research as below:

**Look**

- Gather relevant information (Gather data)
- Build a picture: Describe the situation (Define and describe)

**Think**

- Explore and analyze: What is happening here? (Analyze)
- Interpret and explain: How/why are things as they are? (Theorize)

**Act**

- Plan (Report)
- Implement
- Evaluate

Figure 4: Basic Research Routine

The research process of the author also follows these steps. Firstly, information regarding the Vietnamese cuisine itself, ethnic food in Finland are gathered, from which a general picture about the situation of Vietnamese food among Finns is made. Then, questions such as the specific degree of exoticness and authenticity that customers demand and means to measure them arise. Finally, a project to introduce the cuisine, and seek for adaptation improvement is planned, executed and evaluated. After carefully planning, the author decided to name this action research *Project: Nam*.

## **5.2 *Project: Nam***

The name *Nam* derived from the name of the country *Vietnam* (or *Việt Nam* in Vietnamese.) It literally means the direction *South* in the language. The country has been known by many names *An Nam*, *Đại Nam* and now *Việt Nam* in its course of history with this specific word *Nam* in it to clarify and proclaim a sovereign in the south, as is China in the north, due to the long history between these two countries. By time, the word developed into an identification of the country, its people and culture. Even though it is not commonly used these days anymore, the word still has a specific nostalgic meaning of identification. On the other hand, in the language of Finnish, this *nam* means *yum*. It is not rare to hear a Finn says “nam nam” before enjoying savourable food. Thus, the author decided to use this word as the name of the project, which not only means an introduction to the Vietnamese cuisine but also provoke the senses of something delicious and savoury in Finnish. As a matter of fact, the name of the project was so liked by the

students and teacher from the course that it was then used as the name of the pop-up restaurant event: *StreetNam*.

Initially, the author planned to conduct the research interviews with owners and chefs of restaurants for information such as how they deal with the authenticity of their food served and their customers' opinions about the authenticity. However, acknowledging the abstract problems of how to exactly describe authenticity and other difficulties might occur reaching these restaurants, another approach was been devised. The author realized it could be more beneficial to have a small project, which introduces the cuisine to the students, potential customer targets, then let these students cook and taste Vietnamese dishes that are based on authentic recipes. During that, answers to the research questions would be collected and analyzed from this audience, which would provide more direct experiences and the answers to the thesis' question. Therefore, change in research method was made. What is more, in further discussing with LAB UAS, the project was modified and included a pop-up restaurant event, of which purposes would be further justified in the following parts.

This project, which collaborates with LAB UAS was introduced to the HOTRA19 group students from the course "Food Production" information about the cuisine of Vietnam and some authentic food items from regions of the country, in the form of a workshop. These students are also the sample audience for data collecting. Therefore, purposeful sampling method was used, to ensure the Finnish background of all respondents and to facilitate the wholesome and continuous project to the same target group. After an introduction presentation of Vietnamese cuisine and dishes, these students would be part of the team that prepare the food for the pop-up restaurant event. By doing this, these students do not only gain new information, direct experiences about the new cuisine, ingredients and preparation methods; but also a clearer understanding that helps them answering the author's questions for the research in more detail. Besides the target students, outside customers who try these dishes can also provide their constructive feedbacks for the partner of this project: LAB UAS.

The workshop took place on 3 different dates spreading over two weeks. During the first day, after the presentation, the students were proposed about the ideas,

menu for the pop-up restaurant the following week. Then the students were made into two small teams. The restaurant team took care of marketing in the school's facility and on social media, then served on the event day. The kitchen team worked on two days, one day before to make most of the preparations and during the event.

This project was arranged in the facility of LAB UAS, which includes classroom for the introduction presentation, the kitchen facility for food preparation and a dining area for the pop-up event as well as the tasting of the student group after that. The fees of ingredients were covered by LAB UAS and customers paid for each dish in À la Carte style. The menu for the pop-up restaurant as well as for this course's students were planned based on availability of ingredients and possibility in time and equipment in LAB UAS' kitchen. Some ingredients are bought by the course's teacher and some by the author from an Asian store in Helsinki. There were two starters, Butter sautéed corn with dried shrimp (*Bắp xào bơ*), Steamed rice cakes with shrimps (*Bánh bèo tôm cháy*). Three different components to go with rice, which could also be combined on order, are Shrimp paste pork belly (*Ba rọi mắm ruốc*), Stir-fried calamari with curry (*Mực xào cà ri*) and Lemongrass chili deep-fried tofu (*Đậu hủ chiên xả ớt*). Customers could also order a sweet and sour soup, called *Canh chua*, to go with their rice. The dessert was a traditional dessert called herbal or grass jelly (*Thạch sương sáo*), which is believed to have the cooling effect according to Eastern culinary philosophies. Beverages, include coffee (black or with condensed milk) and tea, were served iced cold as in Vietnam. The menu is shown below.

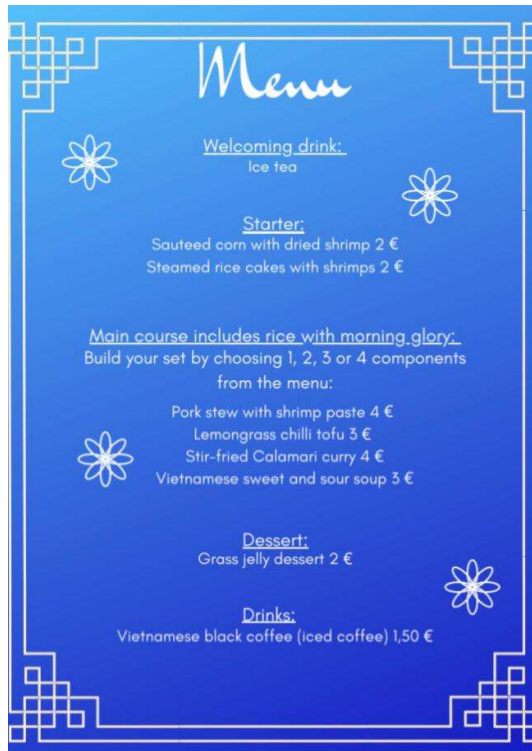


Figure 5. Pop-up restaurant Menu

### 5.3 Data Collection Method

According to Munn and Drever (1990, p.9), questionnaires are a popular way to gather data not only in large scale surveys but also in small-scale researches, given that the data that the researcher wants to find out and kind of data the questionnaire will provide are both clear. In their book, these authors also mention that there are two main types of questionnaires: face-to-face interview and documents with questions to be answered by respondents, in which the former might have important influences on the collected data. Thus, the author has chosen the document to-be-filled type of questionnaire to collect data. Munn & Drever (1990, pp.10-12) point out the benefits of questionnaire including efficient use of time, anonymity and standardised questions, which might be difficult to achieve using interview techniques. Convenient questionnaires are not without limitations, which includes time consuming preparation and that the data collected can be superficial and tends to be descriptive rather than explanatory (Munn & Drever 1990, p.13). However, to avoid collecting superficial and descriptive data, open questions can be used and the author's questionnaire consists mainly of this type

of questions. The research data collected is both quantitative and qualitative, as Robson (2007, p.23) pointed out that there can be considerable advantage in using a mixture of these two methods. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, open questions play the main role, thus the the larger amount of qualitative data over quantitative one. As mentioned above, besides the main sample audience, there are also outside customers who come for the pop up restaurant event. There is also a simplified version of questionnaire for this group, which further supports the author to address the research problem. However, they are not the main targeted sample, thus irrelevant for this research, for reasons such as large quantity and mixed backgrounds, which do not suit this thesis research.

There are two questionnaires in total, with the first one, preliminary questions, measuring popularity of Vietnamese cuisine among these students and the second addresses the research questions. The questions in these questionnaires were formed around from the theory of culinary experience realms, though simplified so as not to confuse the students with no information about this specific theory and to minimize the language barriers. The element of exoticness is measured by the opinions collected after introducing 7 food items in the pop-up menu, which are not yet popular in Finland to this student group. Similarly, the questions in the questionnaire would be formed to be simple, but still lead to their opinions on each food item's edibility and palatability.

#### **5.4 Validity and Reliability**

"Validity refers to whether or not something actually measures what it claims to measure" (Robson 2007, p. 72). The research was to measure the degree of authentic Vietnamese food acceptance among Finns and the adjustments necessary to adapt to their tastes. Therefore, by conducting a research among a class of only Finnish students with actual examples of Vietnamese dishes to taste before providing the data, the author hoped to achieve a certain degree of validity, in spite of the limitation in sample audience. The data collecting questions will also be formed around the same theory of Realms of culinary experience. Furthermore, the customer feedback collected from the pop-up event also helped triangulating and solidifying the degree of authenticity in the food proposed.

Also according to Robson (2007, p. 71), reliability reflects whether the data collected remains when the measurement is repeated under the same condition. He also argues that in qualitative data collection, reliability is somehow dubious, since highly standardized data collection methods, when dealing with real life situations, are neither appropriate nor feasible. Provided that the data for this research are largely in qualitative form, high and exact reliability should not be the author's main concern.

## **6 Results Analysis**

As already mentioned, students from the whole "Food Production" class will be the sample. However, since data collection was divided into two parts and given on two different dates, the number of respondents changed. More specifically, in the first questionnaire handed to the students before the presentation, there were 16 respondents in total and the second after the pop-up restaurant event, 18. Regardless, the change in number of respondents is not drastic, as well as the first questionnaire did not address the research questions yet. Thus, there is no large influence on the final results.

### **6.1 Preliminary questions**

As explained in previous part, the author chose this class of students purposefully, for reasons of ensuring the Finnish background and the continuous participation of these students throughout the project. However, during the presentation day, some students were absent, thus for the first questionnaire, only 16 respondents' answers were collected.



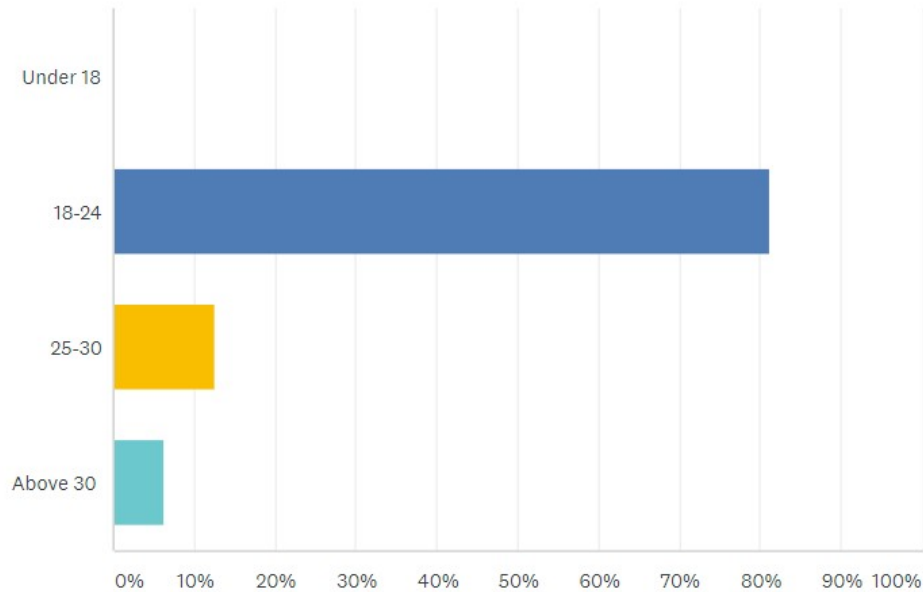


Figure 6: Respondents' Age Groups

Gender wise, 14 out of 16 students are female, and other 2 are male respondents. Most of the respondents are between 18 and 24 years old, then 2 students are between 25 to 30 and one student is above 30 years old.

### 6.1.1 Previous Knowledges and Experiences

Five out of 16 respondents answer that they have previous experiences with Vietnamese cuisine, even though limited. The main sources are television, the internet and books. One of these students has also been to Vietnam before and tried its food, as the student writes "In many restaurant and I have also been there." Among other 11 students, even though not having experiences with Vietnamese food, 3 have the knowledge that Vietnamese cuisine uses many spices. For example, one student responds "I have not eaten Vietnamese food but I think it can be spicy and there are lots of flavors."

### 6.1.2 Expectations

In general expectations, 2 students have tasty as an expectation for Vietnamese cuisine. Other 2 students expect different flavors and food profile, different from Finnish food.

Taste wise, half of the respondents answer that they expect Vietnamese food to be spicy. One expects it to be sweet, 1 to be salty and another one writes taste expectation are both sweet and salty. Other opinions are distinctive flavors, savoury, seasoned and exotic.

Regarding ingredients, 6 respondents have vegetables or fresh vegetables in the expected ingredients. Four students answer fish, one chicken, one pork and some other simply write meat as the expected protein ingredient. Seven respondents answer either noodles or rice, or both for food staple. In spice used, 3 respondents have ginger in their answers and 3 chili.

In preparation methods, the most expected method is stir-frying, with 6 respondents mentioning, and 4 mentioning wok using. Deep-frying is mentioned by 3 students. Other cooking methods that are mentioned once are long preparations, steaming, boiling and smoking.

In food presentation, 9 respondents expect Vietnamese food to be colorful. One mentioning noodles are served with different kinds of broths and vegetables. One mentions food to be presented in different bowls. Others expect in banana leaf, cups, and small plates.

## **6.2 Opinions and Suggestions**

This second questionnaire was given to the students during the pop-up restaurant week, in which there were more students coming to prepare for the event than on the presentation day. Thus, answers from 18 respondents were collected, in comparison with the previous 16.

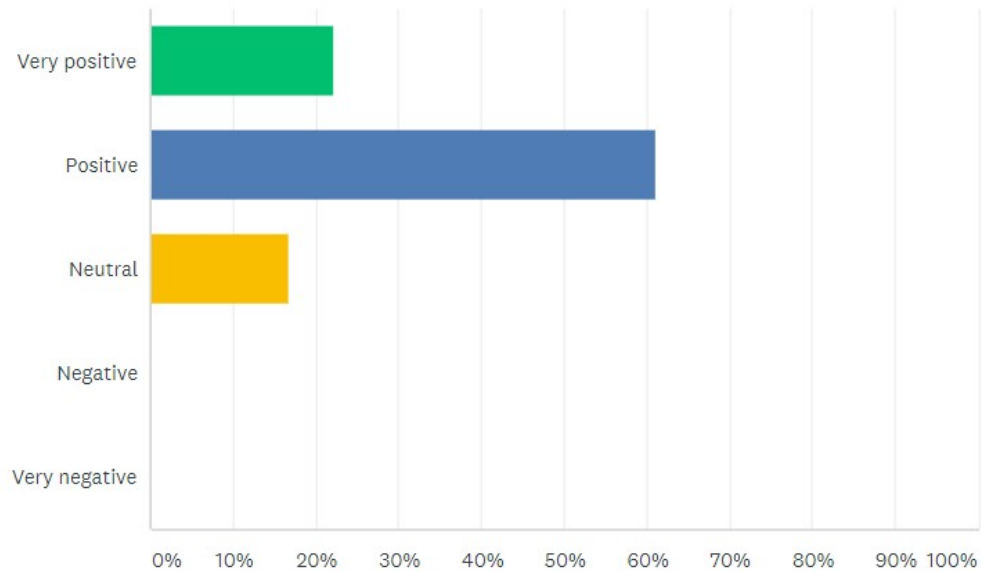


Figure 7: Respondents' General Experiences after Tasting the Food

The first question addresses the general thoughts of the students with the food in the menu, which they had after the pop-up restaurant had been closed. Four students express that they have a very positive experience with these dishes. Meanwhile, 11 respond that they feel positive with the food. Then, the last 3 students have neutral opinions. There are neither negative nor very negative experiences of the food.

For the sauteed corn with dried shrimp dish, most of the respondents (17 out of 18) like it. They all like its taste. Some examples of this opinion are "Shrimps and corn fit(s) good (well) together", "I liked the taste very much", "Usually I don't like corn but in this dish I liked it..", "I liked it!", "It was very juicy and it tasted great" "Supergood!!". One of them even mentions in more detail that the buttery and the sweet tastes are what make it good. Two respondents also mention that they like the texture of this dish. However, one respondent dislikes it because "Maybe (it is) too sweet". Other comments are that the dish looks a little bit boring. Another reason for one respondent not to like it is because of the shrimp ingredient in the dish. In recommendation section, there are two suggestions about the appearance of the dish, saying "It didn't look delicious" and it needs a little more garnishing.

The next question asks for the same information about the second starter dish – Vietnamese rice cake with shrimp. All of the respondents like this dish, praising the texture and the taste of the dish with answers like “Excellent”, “Very good and interesting” and “It was good!” Other write that the dish was beautiful. The points that make some respondents dislike the dish are that the rice cake was a little dried. One of the suggestions is “It dried easily, need(s) to find a way to keep the spring onion fresh longer”. Other also write that the size is too small and it needs more toppings, flavours and saltiness.

For the shrimp paste pork, 15 out of 18 respondents show positive experience, saying “The smell was (a) little bit weird but the taste was very good!”, “Pork was really good, so tasty”, “Spices were good”, “The taste was very good”, “Seasoning was great” One of the respondents did not taste it because of shrimp allergy. Three students did not like it because of the bad smell from shrimp paste. One respondent dislikes the sweetness and prefers it to be salty. No further recommendation was given to this dish.

Regarding the stir-fried curry calamari, except for 1 calamari allergy case, there are 16 respondents showing interest in the dish, commenting “It was good and tasty”, “Great spices!”, “Really nice taste, good and spicy”, “Great, (I) liked that it's spicy”. The factors that make them like the dish are the taste, use of spices and ingredients. The factor making them dislike it was the texture was a little chewy. There is no further recommendation.

Twelve students like the chili and lemongrass fried tofu, commenting “Tastier than tofu I've eaten before”, “The spices were great”, “lemongrass was (a) nice herb”. Ten respondents do not like it because “It was a bit dry”, “Tofu was a little bit bland”, “A bit tasteless”. Two of the respondents write that they do not like tofu. Nine students suggest that the tofu should have more flavor, spice and saltiness, as can be seen in comments like “Maybe little more flavour (chili and lemon grass)”, “Maybe more seasoning”, “More salt and spices” Another suggests the size of the tofu be smaller.

For the sweet and sour soup, only 8 students like it. However, students liking the soup say “The soup tasted so good”, “Tastes good. Like the flavouring. Not too

sweet”, “Taste was good, I like it!”, “Taste was interesting”, “Looked great, nice balance of tastes”. Another specifically points out that the use of mung beansprout and cilantro is the highlight. Nine students dislike this soup for many reasons. Four students write that it has too many tomatoes and tastes like ketchup. There is one student who does not like the sweetness but another one does not like the sourness on the other hand. One student expresses that “Pineapple was not good on that” There are also neutral opinions for this soup, such as “It was (a) little different (than) what I have been used to eat. New experience.”, “A little bit different than (what) I am used to” and “I dont like sweet and sour things usually so its a personal preference. But there was lots of favour” One recommendation for it is that vegetables should be cut into smaller size.

About the final dessert, the grass jelly, only 5 answers show interest in it, specifying “(The) jelly has nice colour and texture”, “Sweet and mint was great addition in it”, “Looked nice”, “Tastes fresh” and “Sweet taste” Up to 12 answers showed unfavorable opinions. For example “Weird”, “Not my favourite”, “I didn’t like that mint and the texture was weird”, “The texture wasn’t nice and the taste was a little bit bad”, and “Wasn’t my taste”. In general, collective opinions agree that the texture is not familiar from Finnish perspective and the jelly tastes bland. Neutral opinions say “Pretty confusing dessert from a Finnish perspective. Hard to form an opinion” and “It is so different from finnish food, looked nice”. Three students mention more sugar or sweetness for recommendation, one of whom specifies “Sugar water could be a thicker syrup so it would cover/stick to the jelly”. Another recommend not to have mint in the dessert.

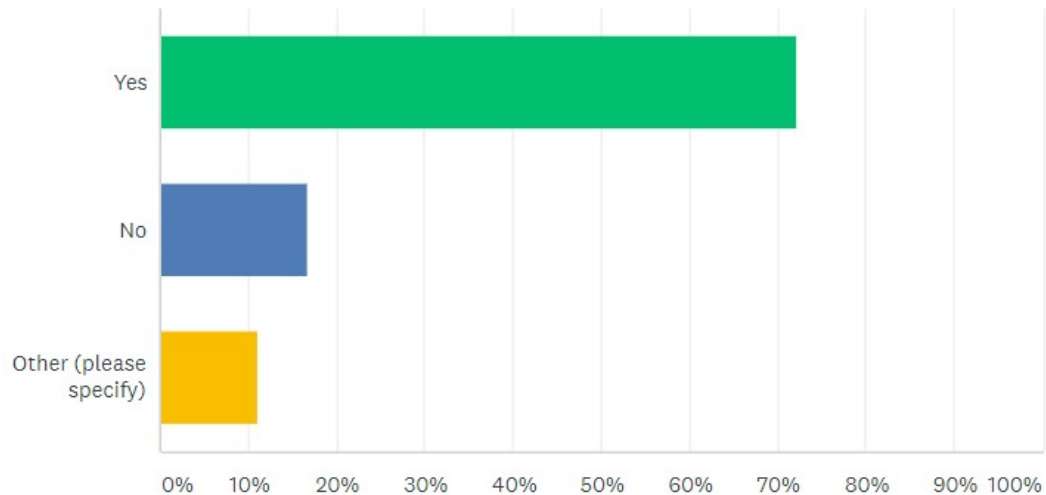


Figure 8: Respondents' will to go to restaurants serving similar food

Ultimately, when being asked if they would go to a restaurant serving these kind of dishes, 13 students chose "yes", 3 students chose "no". There are also two students choosing "other" option. They specify this choice by "Half of these foods I would eat at a restaurant", "Some dishes willingly: pork, soup, corn, calamari maybe".

The last question is for other feedback, but mainly the students express thankfulness for the project and to the author, thus none to be analyzed for this research.

### 6.3 Summary

In general, the majority of the respondents are female and between 18 and 24 years old. Not many respondents have had previous experiences with Vietnamese cuisine. Nevertheless, some of them have certain concepts of what the cuisine would be. Their expectations for Vietnamese food are the generous use of fresh vegetables and herbs and spiciness, which might come from chili or ginger. The most anticipated preparation method is stir-frying, some even specify by using wok. They mostly expect the food to be colorful when presented. Although not many respondents have previous experience or information about Vietnamese cuisine, the majority of the respondents has positive experience, while some other feel very positive, after tasting the food. A few respondents have neutral experience and none feels negative or very negative about the food. In the end,

more than two third of the respondents express that they would go to restaurant with these dishes, and a couple of them are willing to come but only for some dishes, not the entire menu. The following are summaries of each individual food item that they tasted.

The sauteed corn is well received, appreciated for its taste and texture. Recommendation for it is more attention to presentation.

The shrimp rice cake is favored by all of the respondents for the taste, texture and presentation. They suggest the dish be larger in size and have more fillings on top.

The shrimp paste pork is liked for its taste, but some respondents do not receive well that bad smell from fermented shrimp. One suggestion for the dish is to be less sweet and more salty.

Most of the respondents like the stir-fried curry calamari for its good taste, and spices. More attention to the texture while cooking is suggested.

Tofu is not an ingredient loved by everyone. However, the students appreciating this chili and lemongrass tofu like the combination of lemongrass and chili. They recommend that the tofu needs more saltiness and flavors as it was bland.

The sweet and sour soup is more debateable. With less than half of the students like its taste. Other students do not like it because of either the sweetness, the sourness or both. Recommendation is for the vegetables to be cut in smaller size.

According to the responses, the grass jelly dessert is the most exotic dish among others in the menu, with only less than one third of the students enjoying it. They comment that it is much different than anything they have had in Finland and do not really enjoy it. They comment that more sweetness is necessary for this dessert.

## **7 Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter will interpret the analyzed results by applying the Realm of culinary experience to answer the research questions of “What do they like about this

cooking?” and “What do they dislike about this cooking?” and applying strategies of adjusting realms to answer the research question “Do they think that adjustments are necessary? If yes, then what are these adjustments?”

### **7.1 Exoticness, Edibility and Palatability of Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine**

By and large, not many Finnish students have had actual experience with Vietnamese cuisine yet, but they do have a certain concept, a sketch about the cuisine. These concepts come from different media and academic sources. When Vietnamese food is mentioned, they might have expectations of healthy dishes from fish, stir-fried in woks, and prepared with many fresh herbs and vegetables, which made these dishes colorful in presentation. In this way, to the students, Vietnamese is not a total alien cuisine with all exotic ingredients. There are certain familiar factors with cookings that they have already known. Some fresh herbs such as cilantro and vegetables such as water spinach are still exotic to this group, but they both received positive reaction. Even so, there is still a line in the sand. Such ingredients made by fermentation methods like shrimp paste, with its odour, still raise some eyebrows. Thus, with fermented products, many of the Finns might not be fans. Last but not least, jelly as a dessert still has not gained popularity in Finland, then it gets more exotic for them when it comes to Vietnamese grass jelly. It seems that Finnish eaters are still not ready for the idea of a healthy jelly, according to the East's *yin* and *yang* philosophy, as a dessert.

Regarding edibility of Vietnamese food, most common dishes meet the criterion of Finnish people. Meat products and hot dishes, are cooked well done. Allergy such as gluten intolerance does not cause much problems for hot dishes served with rice. With lactose intolerant Finns, Vietnamese can still offer most of its desserts and beverages. Many sweet desserts or drinks are served with syrup or coconut milk, as dairy product had not come to the country and go into the cuisine for long. From the research results, some students do have allergies to seafood ingredients such as shrimp or calamari, so food that contains these elements might not be suitable for all Finnish diners.



Palatability wise, it appears that *Huế* cuisine's steamed rice cake is very well received for its texture and presentation and needs just little more work on the taste. Southern Vietnamese food, with a fair degree of influence from French and European cuisine, the butter sautéed corn in this case, is also suitable for their palate. However, the Southern signature of sweetness or "sweet and sour" in food might not be as well received. Finns prefer their food to taste salty and savoury, and neither sweet or "sweet and sour" are optimal taste choices. With Asian ingredients that are not so exotic like curry and calamari, when prepared with anticipated Asian method like stir-fried in woks, receive positive feedback. Even though being mentioned as an exotic experience, positive receptions for the use of strong Asian spices such as curry, lemongrass and chili actually exceeds the author's expectation. Many Finnish students like the use of these strong spices in the food. As it has been mentioned in the research of Dinh (2013), tofu has not been the favorite food for everyone, as some students mention that even though the lemongrass and chili tofu was good, tofu was still not their favorite food. As mentioned above, the herbal taste and jelly texture are not attractive to the Finns. Thus, should it be possible, other desserts like Vietnamese sweet soups (*chè*) or fresh fruits might be recommended as dessert.

## **7.2 Adaptation to Finnish Taste**

From the collected results, adjustments and adaptations are necessary and have been suggested. To make adjustments to these authentic Vietnamese dishes in order to raise the attractiveness among Finnish diners, the two realms negotiating strategies, Menu selection and Recipe adaptation will be discussed.

Menu selection wise, as has been shown in the results, when planning menu, it is safer to build dishes around common proteins like pork, beef and chicken, as some Finnish diners might have allergies to seafood. Except for fish sauce, other fermented products like shrimp paste might be used in a gentler and milder manner in seasoning or be excluded from the recipe. It seems that street foods like summer rolls, spring rolls or butter sautéed corn are more interesting for the Finns. Thus, this might be the category that is suitable for them and worth further and deeper exploring. Then different types of steamed rice cake or tapioca cake (*bánh bèo, bánh bột lọc, bánh nậm*, etc.) can also be put into consideration in

menu planning as the presentation and palatability of one of these steamed rice cake (*bánh bèo*) were highly appreciated during the pop-up restaurant event.

Vietnamese herbs, spices and vegetables are also interesting for the Finnish palate not only for their tastes but also health benefits. Therefore, Southern dishes, which have generous use of these fresh ingredients might catch the attention of eaters in Finland. Stir-fried dishes, as similar to those in Chinese cuisine, have been popular in Finland, so they can be potential bestsellers for a restaurant's menu. Desserts wise, other Vietnamese desserts like sweet soups from beans or fruits, or European influenced desserts such as Vietnamese flavours ice cream, Choux pastry (*bánh su kem*) might be more suitable for Finnish taste than jelly-texture desserts like *rau câu* or *thạch*.

The second strategy to negotiate these food on the culinary experience realms is Recipe adaptation. During this project, salt was not used as generously as in original Vietnamese recipes, for fear of excessive saltiness might be troublesome for the event. However, feedbacks about the necessity of more saltiness show up many times then. Therefore, the author learned that the saltiness in authentic recipes should be kept, otherwise some dishes might be too bland from both Finnish and Vietnamese perspectives. Beside salt, Vietnamese cookings use fish sauce for food saltiness. Even though there is a certain degree of difference between countries' fish sauce, using the fish sauce sold in Finnish stores instead of the traditional Vietnamese fish sauce is still acceptable. Then the sweetness is also an important element, as some Vietnamese sweet soups usually go with crushed ice, it is important that the main ingredients are sweet enough so the total dessert will not be bland when these ices melt. Then comes another matter of sweetness in food. The sweetness of Southern Vietnamese cooking does not suit well with the Finnish palate. It has been mentioned in a couple of answers that they do not appreciate the sweetness, in hot dishes that are supposed to be salty and savoury. Thus, dishes that can be prepared in the Northern style, which is not sweet and focuses more on saltiness might be more suitable to serve Finnish customers.

As learned from this project, seafood like shrimps and calamari can be those originated from Europe and in frozen condition, too. Although Vietnamese cuisine

holds fresh ingredients in high esteem, it is a challenge to procure these ingredients the same way in Finland. Hence, thawed seafood is reasonable enough. Regarding Vietnamese vegetarian choices, other ingredients such as seitan, mushrooms can also be considered in menu planning, as tofu is not the most popular protein alternative, according to this research.

As not all Vietnamese dishes are hot and spicy, with moderate amount when using, they can create the elements of exotic and novelty for the diners. The respondents have shown positive perception for herbs such as culantro (*ngò gai*), spices such as curry powder, lemongrass, oyster sauce, etc. Therefore, dishes using these ingredients have potential to be appetizing in Finnish perception. The final adjustment that the author learned from the research is that should the grass jelly be the served dessert, or any dessert in general, more careful touch in the sweetness is important. In Finnish taste, desserts like the grass jelly should be sweeter than the original recipe.

## **8 Evaluations**

For the author, this research and the project within is an opportunity to introduce his home country's cuisine and eating culture to more people. It is also a precious personal development, where the author learned how to plan a workshop-like project, organize a kitchen with different dishes in such a scale, ingredients order invoicing procedure, and so much more. The pop-up event was a success, considering the small-scaled marketing plan and preparation in a short time. Some dishes were even marked sold out before the restaurant closing time, in order to allow the students to taste the food after the event. Some spare herbs and vegetables were used for the class educative purposes. With that being said, there was not much food waste from over ordering. Such project would not have been successful without the help and support of the author's supervisor, LAB UAS' teacher, great teamwork of both kitchen and restaurant team of students from "Food Production" course and two of the author's friends who helped in the kitchen during the event.

The author realizes that it is almost impossible to bring true authenticity into this research. Since the author's preparation for instructions, recipes to the students

were not perfect due to the lack of experience in organizing a workshop. Then, the food was prepared with the efforts of many students, most of whom have no idea how these dishes should taste and look. Since there was no trial and adequate experience, the food quality was not guaranteed to be at its best, which might cause misunderstanding as authenticity. Furthermore, the fact that the Finnish audience have the opportunity to make these dishes before tasting has, to a certain degree, affected the objectivity of their answers in the questionnaire. On the other hand, even the author himself cannot say all of his own cooked food would be truly authentic. Therefore, the author only hopes to bring the idea, a concept of how authentic dishes in Vietnamese would look like and taste to the Finnish audience.

The choice of dishes and ingredients is also based on their procurement availability in Finland, then there can only be a certain amount of dishes to be introduced in the research. The dishes used in this research might not represent the Vietnamese cuisine. Therefore, from the results of this research, study in different degree of scale and depth might still be taken for more insights on this topic.

The thesis objectives are to find out whether Finnish people like authentic Vietnamese cooking methods, ingredients and tastes, etc. and what they prefer to change. From these results, the possibility for a more authentic Vietnamese restaurant concept serving more diverse dishes is deduced. From the research results, Vietnamese cuisine receives good responses, that they would consider to go to a restaurant with similar food as in the pop-up restaurant event. Adaptation to their taste is necessary, in terms of seasoning, or in some cases, presentation, and for some ingredients. Otherwise, most Vietnamese cooking methods, recipes and main ingredients can be kept to maintain the authenticity element.

## **9 Figures**

Figure 1: Typical family meal (Thời Đại 2019)

Figure 2: Vietnamese Pizza (Wandercooks 2019)

Figure 3. The Realms of Culinary Experience (Long 2004)

Figure 4: A Basic Research Routine (Stringer 2014)

Figure 5. Pop-up restaurant Menu

Figure 6: Respondents' Age Groups

Figure 7: Respondents' General Experiences after Tasted the Food

Figure 8: Respondents' will to go to restaurants serving similar food

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Preliminary Questionnaire

### Preliminary questions about Vietnamese cuisine

The main goal of this questionnaire is to learn Finns' experiences and opinions with Vietnamese cuisine before the following presentation. This information will later be used to compare with opinions collected after the tasting in the Pop-up Restaurant event.

\* 1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

\* 2. Age

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-30
- ☐ Above 30

\* 3. Before this presentation, what knowledges or experiences do you have with Vietnamese food? Please specify from where and when you have eaten/watched/read/heard about it.

\* 4. What expectations do you have for Vietnamese food?

Tastes	<div></div>
Ingredients	<div></div>
Cooking methods	<div></div>
Dish presentation (how it looks)	<div></div>
Other expectations	<div></div>

## Appendix 2: Main Questionnaire

1(2)

### Opinions and adapting recommendations on authentic Vietnamese food

The main goal of this questionnaire is to learn your experiences, opinions with authentic Vietnamese cuisine after you have tasted all dishes in the pop-up restaurant menu and to collect any possible suggestions. Please give your opinions for each food item as detailed as possible. It will help the student to conclude with a more meaningful research result. Thank you very much!

\* 1. What is your general experience after tasting these food items?

☐ Very positive

☐ Negative

☐ Positive

☐ Very negative

☐ Neutral

\* 2. What do you like/dislike about the sauteed corn? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like

Dislike

Recommendation

Other comments

\* 3. What do you like/dislike about the rice cake with shrimp? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like

Dislike

Recommendation

Other comments

\* 4. What do you like/dislike about the shrimp paste pork? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like

Dislike

Recommendation

Other comments

\* 5. What do you like/dislike about the curry calamari? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like

Dislike

Recommendation

Other comments



\* 6. What do you like/dislike about the lemongrass and chilli fried tofu? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like	
Dislike	
Recommendation	
Other comments	

\* 7. What do you like/dislike about the sweet and sour soup? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like	
Dislike	
Recommendation	
Other comments	

\* 8. What do you like/dislike about the grass jelly dessert? What change do you recommend for it (taste, ingredients, how it looks, etc.)?

Like	
Dislike	
Recommendation	
Other comments	

\* 9. Would you go to a restaurant serving the same Vietnamese food?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)

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10. Other feedbacks

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