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Space Planning for a Vietnamese HotPot Restaurant in Helsinki, Finland

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2017 Laurea





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Space Planning for a Vietnamese HotPot Restaurant in Helsinki, Finland

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Degree Programme in
Bachelor of Hospitality Management
May, 2017

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Year	2017	Pages	63
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The purpose of this study was to establish a detailed plan focusing primarily on space planning for a Vietnamese HotPot restaurant. The idea about this restaurant is a business plan which is anticipated to be opened in the future. In theoretical background, the main issue was to study about location selection as well as space planning and environmental psychology. Important elements regarding a built working environment and how they can affect the success of the business were studied carefully in order for the author to apply in a practical case.

Several research methods were taken into use, such as observations, benchmarking and online survey. Observation and benchmarking focused on space planning of four most popular Vietnamese restaurant in metropolitan area in Helsinki, Finland. After that, the results were analysed carefully in order to identify the differences, the advantages and disadvantages. Additionally, an online survey was also conducted to gather the information about customers' general preferences in indoor establishment. All information collected from empirical study acted as a supporting guide for the author to make the final decisions in the detailed plan for the Vietnamese HotPot restaurant.

After studying theoretical background and gathering essential practical information, the author was able to produce a specific plan for location selection and space planning for the restaurant. Considering different factors, the author has concluded that the plan is potential to be put in practice, yet it is inevitable that there are certain obstacles in practical situations. Nevertheless, the author believes that this thesis will act as a guide for initial establishment and a basement for further developments not only for her personal plan but also for other business operating in the same sector in the future.

Keywords: space planning, Vietnamese restaurant, HotPot, environmental psychology, location selection

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1 Introduction

In recent years, the number of foreigners has been rising considerably in Finland, including also Asian people. Consequently, there has been an integration between Eastern and Western culture, especially in cuisine. It is evident that South East Asian food culture is becoming more popular in Finland, including Vietnamese food. Linh (2013) discussed that Vietnamese cuisine embraces not only great nutrient content but also surprising complexity, which reveals promising future in the food industry since it satisfies the requirements of nowadays consumers' decision making process. As a result, the future of Asian food industry in Finland is considerably potential.

Also from observation, the author realized that there are several Vietnamese restaurants in Finland, noticeably in metropolitan area. Evidently, most of the businesses focus on marketing and serving the most popular dishes, for example Pho (Vietnamese noodle, usually with beef or chicken), or Bun Bo (another kind of Vietnamese noodle). However, as a Vietnamese person who has a profound understanding about the cuisine and has been living for more than three years in Finland, the author acknowledges that there are many other parts of the food culture that have not been introduced to Finland's citizens. The combination between personal hobby as cooking, the love for Finland and the expectation to introduce Vietnamese culture to Finnish community has brought to the author an idea of a Vietnamese restaurant that is different than all others in Finland. The business introduces a fresh taste of a new potential dish that is completely suitable for cold weather in Finland.

There are countless issues regarding establishing a restaurant, such as location selection, menu brainstorming, marketing plan, financial control and so on. The background as a Facility Management student is a significant advantage for the author's self project, since the knowledge and experiences obtained through learning process might be extremely helpful during setting up the business plan, especially in planning and designing the workplace. This can be described as a golden chance for the student to not only imply information and proficiency obtained from school but also challenge herself to overcome the huge obstacles in a practical situation.

The thesis aims at creating a plan that focuses principally on structure inside a space of a restaurant that is strongly inspired by Asian, especially Vietnamese culture. In this document, the discussion focus mainly on issues regarding physical space of the restaurant, for instance the selection of location; the selection for indoor design such as wall, floor, table, chair; other facilities as ventilation, lighting level, electricity socket and so on. This work would bring to the author a newer and wider perspective and a better understanding about the theoretic-

cal data. Furthermore, it is also expected that readers can achieve a general insight on space planning and Facility Management major.

In order to achieve the purpose of the thesis, it is essential to define and figure out the answers for research problems which are listed below:

- What are important elements regarding a built working environment, in this situation a restaurant physical place, and how they can affect the success of the business?
- How can the space be designed, based on the author's understanding and ability, and what are the potentials of the idea?
- What is the usability of the detailed plan?

When considering the objectives of the thesis, it is necessary to apply different research methods in order to obtain profound understanding about the situation. The project will be carried out by using various methods, such as observations and benchmarking. Additionally, qualitative methods are also applied through arranging an interview.

Several different sources are used to create the background information supporting the thesis. In order to have a broader perspectives on the topic, it is decided that both online resources and offline resources - or literatures, will be studied. Among them, the books are from library of Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Furthermore, online sources such as articles and discussions are also under considered, with the main searching keywords are space planning, restaurant planning, facility management and so on. Data extracted from trustworthy website like Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus) and official website of International Facility Management Association additionally helps building the firm basement for the author to support and develop the idea, which will be shown in the next chapters.

2 Concept of the Vietnamese HotPot restaurant

2.1 The story about hot pot



Figure 1 An illustration of HotPot

According to Urban dictionary, hot pot “usually consisting of a simmering metal pot of stock at the center of the dining table, and several meats, leafy vegetables, mushrooms, wontons, egg dumplings, and seafoods sitting around it.” Usually, these food are cooked and served instantly at the table. It does not take a very long time for the food to be cooked, since they are usually cut into small, or thin pieces to ensure that the cooking time does not exceed 1 minute. Dipping sauces are also used to enhance the flavor of the dish. Several sources suppose that hot pot was originated about two thousands years ago in China (La fondue chinoise, 2015), while other sources argue that the unique dish came from Mongolia and yet it only strongly developed since arriving to Asian countries later and becoming a special kind of food for East Asian people, especially in China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and so on. Despite different hypothesis regarding its origin, hot pot is undoubtedly an unique kind of food and it has become a part of the cultural of each country in East Asia area. It owns a greatness of taste with a hidden message behind: “The high temperature in the hot pot is symbolic of the warmth of tender feeling that those people sitting around it have for each other, while the round shape of the apparatus is a hint at the lack or complete absence of irregularities in the man-to-man relationship. Undoubtedly, this way of eating is not only a figurative embodiment but a visual indication of the willingness to eat from the same pot and to share the same lot. This is the most highly prized merit of group consciousness.” This indicates that hot pot is not only tasteful but also meaningful. It emphasized and somehow, represented the spirit and tradition about the intimacy and connection between family, relatives and community of of Asian people.

Nowadays, along with the development of life and cuisines, hot pot also has changed in many ways yet the main idea stays original. The popularity has traveled to many other countries in the world, and the concept is loved by many people in the world. Despite the similarity in the core idea, there are abundant variety in the recipe for each country. Hot pot in China, Korea, Japan, or Vietnam hold its own speciality and uniqueness, depending on the country's cultural and social traits.

For instance, Chinese version are usually the most diverse among all. Chinese hotpot have either mild or spicy broths, however the main ingredients to be cooked at the table is often meat and sliced mutton fillet. Vegetables, lettuce and mushrooms are also the choice to make the hot pot fuller and more delicious. There are also other kinds of hot pot from different part of China, in which the difference are formed by changing the types of the broths, or the meat served with the hot pot. For example, citizens in the northern part of China enjoys lamb on a common basis, while Cantonese hot pot use fresh seafood, including shrimp, oysters, and squid. Mongolian-style hot pot owns broth with different flavor, which is brought by special components such as goji berries, jujubes, and a mix of herbs (Serious Eats). To Japanese people, they would like to have their hotpot served with sliced beef, vegetables and tofu, with soya sauce in the broth. The broth can also be enjoyed with udon noodles. The most popular hotpot in Japan is the sukiyaki. Another kind of hot pot in Japan is shabu-shabu, where customers can put the leftover rice to the stock (after the meat and vegetables have been eaten), to make a special soup served as the last thing on the table. In Korea, the most popular hot pot might be the kimchee (also known as kimchi) hot pot in which the famous kimchi acts as the main ingredients in setting the flavour of the broth. Just like Japanese people, Korean customers always enjoy hot pot with thin sliced beef, mushrooms, vegetables, and they also love adding the rice, dried seaweed and egg to the remaining broths to have the unique taste of the soup. Meanwhile in Thailand, customers call it Thai suki and prefer the tom yum flavored hot pot the most, which is originated from the famous tom yum soup/ noodle. This kind of hot pot usually owns a taste of sour and spicy, which is perfect for a cold snowy day. For Vietnamese people, the most outstanding characteristic about hot pot is that they usually have it served either with goat meat because of its appetizing taste and nutritious value (according to Vietnamesefood.com.vn). Another remarkable kind of hot pot use seafood as the leading ingredients. Any kind of seafood can contribute to the tastefulness of the pot. Most of the time, they use fish, shrimps, squids, prawns, crabs, fish balls, and so on. This is due to the geographic characteristics of Vietnam: the country owns tropical climate with abundant and complicated river system, which ensures the variety and quantity of seafood caught. Therefore, different regions in the country will have distinctive flavors and ingredients based on their own speciality about geography. Another special thing lies in the vegetables: Vietnamese people have a long list of vegetables that can be served with hot pot, also

because of the climate and land. Additionally, while in China, Korea and Japan, the broth is usually mild and made from chicken in order to ensure that customers can enjoy the taste of accompanying food to the fullest, usually Vietnamese and Thai version has a much more pungent flavor (Los Angeles Times, 2016). This can be caused because of the strong and exceptional kinds of spices that only appear in Vietnam/ Thailand cuisine.

2.2 Reasons behind the restaurant's concept

Located in Northern Europe, besides other famous things, Finland is also well known for its climate. According to Finnish Meteorological Institute, the temperature of the warmest month does not go lower than 10°C and that of the coldest month does not exceed -3°C. This is a proof that the cold weather is a usual and familiar weather phenomenon for people living in this country, which can be understood that their eating habits might be affected. Indeed, the weather do influence eating style in some ways. It is a conventional awareness that in hot summer days, people always thirsty for cold and icy drinks, or ice cream. Fresh and digestible food, for instance salad, vegetables and fruits, are considered to be perfect choice to ensure the refreshing and healthy meals. In contrast, when it is cold outside, people tend to look for a warmness and coziness. Therefore, warm and or spicy food and drinks usually guarantee pleasant and comforting feelings for customers. It is common to have, for instance, soup, stew, or a hot bowl of noodles. Hot chocolate, tea or coffee are perfect choices for drinks. It goes without saying that for Finland's citizenships, these warm and spicy meals are ideal for long lasting cold winter days. This might be one of the reasons why Thai food is a favorable cuisine in Finland, as explained in previous chapters. It also opens up a promising prospect for food that owns hot, or warm, and spicy taste.

From this observation, the author has had the idea about one kind of food that fully meets the listed criterias: hotpot. It is the perfect choice for the weather in Finland. Furthermore, the fact that Finns know and enjoy Thai food is a strong basis to anticipate the future of hot pot. It would not be too much to say that Vietnamese style hot pot and Thai suki have a great chance to develop in Finland. Its strong, pungent flavor together with the ultimately appetizing of accompanying food is expected to help anyone to dispel the coldest winter days and explore the wonders of different cuisines in the world. The restaurant's concept has developed from there, with the aim to bring a little warmth to the residents of Santa Claus' home country, or in other words, to celebrate the long, dark and cold winter by your most beloved ones with the marvellous taste of HotPot.

3 Attributes of space planning for a restaurant

From this chapter, in order to make it easier for reader, the term Facility Management is referred as FM.

3.1 Facility Management: the origin, role and future trend

Facility Management, or FM, is a profession that has only been developing since the early 1970s - 1980s. There are several different definitions for the term. A popular one is 'an integrated approach to operating, maintaining, improving and adapting the buildings and infrastructure of an organization in order to create an environment that strongly supports the primary objectives of that organisation' (Atkin & Brooks 2009). According to International Facility Management Association (IFMA), FM is 'a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology'.

It can be described that FM contributes in maximizing the core business of a company or organisation by managing the office environment, covering various fields. These services including firstly building maintenance, domestic services - in which cleaning and catering can be examples, utilities supplies, and many others such as real estate management, financial management, change management, human resources management, health and safety and contract management (Atkin & Brooks 2009).

From a more simple point of view of Wikipedia, it can be said that FM covers two main areas. The first is the physical space, which can be interpreted as 'space and infrastructure', such as planning, design, workplace, construction, lease, occupancy, maintenance, furniture and cleaning. Another area is 'people and organization', for example catering, accounting, marketing and hospitality. The first term indeed refers to the tangible working environment which is actually the offices and buildings. The second one covers the people and the organization and is related to work psychology and occupational physiology. The mission on facility managers is to understand and provide their customers with these services. Certainly, different organisations would not have the same requirements. Therefore, it is important for facility managers to recognize and provide the most suitable and valuable services in order to support the success of the business.

The core competencies of FM, as described by IFMA, consists of communication, emergency preparedness and business continuity, environmental stewardship and sustainability, finance and business, human factors, leadership and strategy, operations and maintenance, project management, quality, real estate and property management, and also technology.

Apparently, no organization is able to operate smoothly without fundamental elements such as electricity and heating system, maintenance and security, satisfactory cleaning services, and so on. Inadequate performance of any services among those mentioned above might lead to minor or sometimes severe consequences. For example, a restaurant lacking of good catering and cleaning services can create an impression of poor quality and unprofessional per-

formance for customers, which can obviously stop them from having any intention to come back. As a matter of fact, FM plays an important role in ensuring the ultimate efficiency of the business. There is no doubt that together with the development of the world's economics, the number of companies and organisations would rise gradually. Therefore, it is evident that in the future, FM would develop enormously and universally.

3.2 Location and location selection for a business

In their book about location analysis and business site, Church and Murray (2009, 2) claimed that from ancient times, the determination of the most suitable location has always played a vital role, sometimes it might have been even a survival decision for human's ancestors - the hunters and gatherers. The importance of site decisions has never been decreasing, indeed, it only accelerates together with the world's development, as Church and Murray (2009, 2) has asserted, 'such decisions might not be a life and death issue, but they are nonetheless very important'. When regarding economy field, it goes without saying that location is undoubtedly one of the most important issues to be considered for any entrepreneur when establishing their companies. Scarborough (2012, 534) indicated that the business site selection acts as one of very few decisions that influence the company in a profound and permanent way. Also, it is pointed out that careful and precise decision on choosing the location can be an advantage over other business operating in the same sector. To companies in hospitality industry, the right place is more necessary than any other issues. For instance, a well-designed with excellent food quality and reasonable price but located in a remoted area would not be as noticing as a Subway sandwich store in the center railway station, especially for customers who do not own a car and use public transportation everyday. Contrary to that, a restaurant with fine services and acceptable price plus a great location might attract many more customers, due to the fact that it is much more accessible. Sharing the same point of view, Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 18) pointed out that the location will have an impact on several aspects regarding a business. To be more specific, for a restaurant, it might affect on different groups of customers, the reconstruct expenses, source of labour force, selling alcoholic drinks decision, approachability and so on. On the whole, it is evident that location acts as one of the decisive factors concerning the ultimate success for a business in general and a restaurant in specific.

Since site selection's significant position is clearly illuminated, the question is now apparent. How to make a wise decision in choosing the best area for a specific business? What are the prerequisite elements to be considered while picking out the most suitable place? Scarborough (2012) put forward the view that in order to choose the most suitable location, one firm must figure out factors influencing strongly to the business and after that searching for a site that can satisfy these needs. Not all criteria has to be meet, however, the most critical ones should be the priorities to be fulfilled. An example, also according to Scarborough, the

availability of the experienced software engineers is a decisive element for a technology firm in choosing where to located. Scarborough claimed that there are certain steps to follow when planning the location, and it goes from the largest to the smallest level. Initially, one must identify the region to operate in. After that, the city is chosen and the final location will be selected later when considering several criterias, as the figure below illustrates.

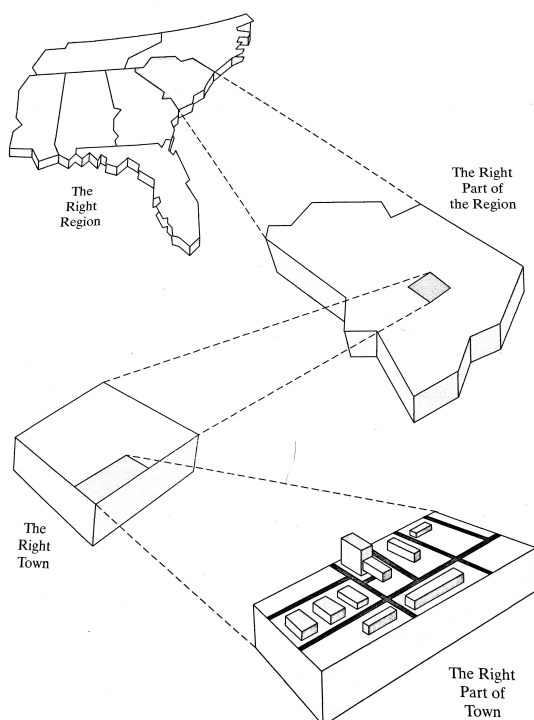


Figure 2 The location decision (Lewison & DeLozier 1984, 341)

When considering the first step (choosing the right region), Scarborough (2012, 535-543) continues to affirm that certain statistics like the development speed in economy, personal incomes, demographic changes, decent infrastructure, and current situation of rivals in the region are prerequisite. However, it also depends on each company's own needs to determine where to put their focus on. Despite the dissimilarity that might vary among the firms, usually entrepreneurs tend to target at developing area and skip the slowly developed region or failing zones. After selecting the appropriate region, the limitation should be tighten until the ideal location is defined. Selecting the proper city is identified through judging several aspects. Some of them, for instance, are population trends, population density, competition, costs, special laws and regulations, compatibility with the neighborhood, living standards of the area, traffic availability, police and fire protection, social services, and the popularity of the location. However, other criterias might also be included due to the difference in each business' operating sector. After investigating several crucial factors and choosing the most suitable city, the company can eventually make their final decision about the ultimate ideal location for their business.

Regarding business performing in hospitality industry, Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 17) supposed that in order to narrow the options, it is a must to define the characteristics of the restaurant whether it is 'convenience oriented' or 'destination oriented'. There is a huge difference between these two. Mostly, the convenience oriented restaurants, - for instance fast food restaurants like McDonalds, Popeyes, Burger King, KFC, or Hesburger - rely on drop-in customers. This means that initially the customers do not have the intention to manage to get in the restaurants, but more likely stop at the place for a quick meal. Most of people are unlikely to drive 30 minutes for a specific KFC store. Therefore, a convenience oriented restaurant must locate in an easily accessible place, which is normally at the railway station, shopping center, or gas stations. In contrast, a destination oriented restaurant is rather a place that the consumers would not hesitate to travel a long way to be there. Particularly, this kind of restaurants might attract customers due to its uniqueness, which results in the customers' purposefully planned visit. The more attractive and unique the concept is, the higher their consumers' desire to experience. Hence, it is not a must for destination oriented restaurant to be located in public places like a railway station. However, it is never a disadvantage to be positioned there due to the high opportunity to draw the attention of both customers who just walk by and who intend to visit.

After reflecting the meaning of restaurant's concept in location selection, the process might be simpler for entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, there are still a number of other factors to consider during the decision making process which are listed below:

- **Restrictions of the area:** consider specific regulations and allowances about, for instance, alcohol beverages.

Small or strangely shaped parking lot: the parking area should be easily accessed and adequate for regular parking requirements.

- **Rental period:** usually a restaurant should avoid short-term rental agreement.
- **Appropriate altitude:** a suitable altitude might have a positive effect on the drainage in different ways.
- **Facility needs:** determine the requirements of electric power, heating system, air conditioning, and ventilation.
- **Urban challenges:** licensing costs more money and the laws and regulations are more difficult in general.
- **Speed of traffic:** high speed drivers are unlikely to spot a restaurant by the sidewalk, which indicates that traffic might also be an elements affecting the number of customers visiting the restaurants.
- **Availability of labour force:** locating near a potential workers market might reveal a better future for the restaurant, and it is remarkably better in the case that public transportation is also good for the employees.

- **Previous ownership:** if the place used to be a restaurant earlier, one should figure out the reasons for the close down and consider if there is anything relating to the location before deciding.
- **Visibility:** the easier the place can be seen, the higher chance that customers would see and visit it. Therefore, hiding in, for instance, a corner of a big shopping center might not attract people to come.
- **Parking:** parking availability usually should be concerned carefully, also in special case like busy time of the day or the year.
- **Approachability:** ensure that customers do not encounter any big obstacles when walking to, or driving to the place. In this situation, traffic lights and street signs can also be considered.
- **Traffic generators:** study neighborhood of the location whether there is any places that would be a gathering spot for people, for instance an event avenue, or a large office building. Also consider the restaurants that are already in the area in order to decide to place the business there or not.
- **Design adaptability:** the restaurant's space planning would be ideal if it can suit different size and shape of the location.
- **Restaurant clusters:** locating in a street lined with eating places would be an advantage. However, consider the growth rate of the area and other rivals carefully. Try to make sure that the concept of the restaurant is not similar to any other in the same area.
- **Frequent and irregular guests:** investigate the demographic data of the population in the nearby area and figure out who can be the regular customers for the place and why might bring a great advantage.

3.3 Environmental psychology

Space designing can be considered as one of the most important factors regarding appearance of a restaurant since usually a potential customer is impressed by the look of the place (Shock et al, 2011). This is explained by the fact that the surroundings of a restaurant can make people feel 'welcome, comfortable, and secure'; meanwhile from a worker's perspectives, it indicates a 'safe, comfortable, and productive' place to work. Shock, Sgovio and Stefanelli (2011, 222) agreed that this feature includes different elements, for instance lighting level, noise level, sound, colors inside the area, walls, temperature control, smell, general layout and visibility. Meanwhile, Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 206) implemented that heating and air conditioning system as well as ventilation is also to be considered regarding a place. Physical elements such as the material of tables and chairs also play an important role to the environment of a restaurant. All these factors create a certain effect to the psychology of consumers. Customers' behaviors and feelings are impacted by their surroundings (Baraban and Duchrocher, 2010). This influence can be shown in several ways. From time to time, customers

either want to have a quick meal and leave, yet in other circumstances, they might want to stay longer for a long conversation or joyfulness, all under the effect of the surroundings. In this chapter, the author focus on lighting level, colors, temperature control, noise pollution control, and ventilation.

3.3.1 Lighting

Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 206) supposed that lighting is the most crucial factor relating to environmental design, yet the most challenging to establish. It affect the dining area in different fields, one of those is the atmosphere of the place, the attractiveness of the food, and also the effectiveness of the kitchen. The establishment of lighting includes the intensity, lighting source, contrast, and also the quality of lighting (Baraban and Durocher, 2010). This establishment depends on the type and features of the facility. For instance, a fast food restaurant tends to use bright lighting level, with big windows to make use of the daylight, since this will give customers the feeling of a quick, convenient meal. On the other hand, darker lighting level might enhance the intimacy and privacy, therefore, it is suitable for a romantic dinner (Katsigris & Thomas, 2009). Overall, the lighting level control depends on the concept of each place, due to to huge diversity in types of restaurants. This diversity will appear even in just one dining room, or even different time of the day: energetic and bright for breakfast, relaxing for lunch, and romantic for dinner. For instance, a luxurious restaurant may apply the use of sparkle since it usually enhances the elegance for the atmosphere. There are many ways to use light, the most popular is direct lighting and indirect lighting. Indirect lighting improves the general radiance of the place without leaving any massive shadows (for example, wall sconces); meanwhile direct lighting focus on one specific point such as a booth, for example, chandeliers (Katsigris & Thomas, 2009). The color of the light also plays an important role since colors and lighting system is closely related to each other.

3.3.2 Colors

Colors is considered as critical in almost all aspects in order to achieve successful restaurant design. It does not only create the ambiance and enhance customers' appetites but also may have impact on various fields, for instance the atmosphere, the intimacy, or the emotions of people. Different tones of colors will create distinctive impact on customers' psychology or perceptions about their surroundings. Therefore, the more effectively a restaurant design utilizes color to form the appearance and improve customer's sensation, the more possible it is for a long-term success. To achieve this goal, one must understand about the characteristics and meanings of different colors as well as the concept behind various theme colors. For instance, in order to make a large room feel less empty and more intimate and formal, dark and warm colors are the suitable choices (Baraban & Durocher, 2010).

The intensity of a color is also a crucial factors when making a space plan for a restaurant. The status whether a color is in its pure form, such as red or blue, or muted by a complement to change its degree of saturation. For example, yellow color is especially appropriate for breakfast areas of a restaurant since it brings create 'cheerful and exuberant' feelings (Baraban & Durocher, 2010). However the color green, which usually reminds us of nature and environment, can create an effect of fresh feeling, yet it changes the appearance of skin tones and certain foods. Consequently, green-cast yellows might cause a disturbing effect. The combination of bold, bright colors and excellent lighting system usually is suitable for fast food restaurant, meanwhile subtle colors often bring out a relaxing aura (Baraban & Durocher, 2010). The meaning of colors is shown in the table below.

Color	Meanings & usability
RED	Red means aggression, hostility, warning, danger, fire, lushness and passion. It improve the appetite. It can go with gold, wood, brass, crystal, mirrors, or make a classic mixture with black.
GREEN	Green reminds about nature and environment, hence it creates a fresh and well-being atmosphere. However, it also suggests envy and jealousy. It can go with live plants and light-colored woods. However, it should be use just adequately since an exaggeration of using this color might lead to disturbing appearance of skin tones and foods appearance.
YELLOW	Yellow usually means luminous sunlight, expansiveness, high spirits. It creates a cheerful, exuberant feeling and can be used as a color accent. It can be used as a highlight. One should avoid using green-cast yellow due to its disturbance effect.
CHROME	Chrome owns such characteristics as neutral, cold, hard and clean. It suggests modern style as well as antique style and nostalgic.
GOLD	Gold reminds about wealth, generosity and power and can be used to balance cold materials (for instance stone) and brighten dark materials (for instance dark wood).
BLUE	Blus is peaceful, cool and refreshing and can help in create the feeling about larger room and bring a calming effect. It can be used with warm colors.
NEUTRALS	Darker browns usually means masculinity and lighter terra cottas suggests warm and femininity. This is suitable for tabletop since it set off the colors of food. Neutral colors also can act as a flexible backdrop for different color accents.

WHITE	White colors can act as a background and harmonize well with various colors. It can act as a wall only when in a quick service restaurant, and one should avoid using white as the main color for tabletops.
BLACK	Black color owns negative, depressing feelings, however it also enhances the stylish appearance. Black can harmonize well with all colors, especially white, to create a contrasting color scheme.

Table 1 Different colors and their meanings (Baraban & Durocher, 2010)

When combining colors which are in the same tones, there can also be various effects depending on the concept of the colors included. The table below shows clearly meaning, advantages and disadvantages of different color schemes:

Color schemes	Colors	Advantages	Disadvantages
Light color scheme	Ivory, beige, white, pale yellow, light gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often used to make a smaller room look bigger than it really is - Evoke a leisurely and relaxed feeling - Encourage customers to stay longer, making these colors great for more upscale establishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not ideal for restaurants with high-volume goals, like fast food joints, quick-serve restaurants, and take-out businesses
Dark color scheme	Deep blue, purple, crimson, dark gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often used to make larger rooms look smaller and feel less empty - Create a more intimate setting and reduce the impersonal feeling of large group dining, making them ideal for banquet halls - Mask structural blemishes, like duct work or chipped molding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not a good idea to over-use dark colors in your establishment, especially in small dining rooms because the mood can become depressing
Warm color scheme	Red, yellow, terracotta, orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often incorporated into a restaurant through wall hangings, tabletop accessories, tablecloths, and brick accent walls - When combined with soft lighting, warm, earthy colors help cus- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not ideal for fast food establishments that want customers in and out as quickly as possible

		<p>tomers relax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage customers to stay longer, making them ideal for fine dining establishments that serve multiple courses 	
Cool color scheme	Green, blue, purple, burgundy, metallic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a reassuring and inspiring mood - Typically incorporated into a restaurant through accent walls, candles, charger plates, and tabletop accessories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blue is known to suppress the appetite, which means the main focus point of your restaurant shouldn't be a cool color - Evoke a sense of thirst more than hunger, so they're more suited for the bar area
Bright color scheme	Bright shades of red, yellow, orange, green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the heart rate and blood pressure, which excites customers and makes them eat faster - Best for restaurants that want high table turnover rates, like fast food establishments, dining halls, and cafeterias - Commonly incorporated into the decor through plates, mugs, and other tabletop accessories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since they make the customers feel rushed, they're not suited for fine dining establishments

Table 2 Different color schemes and their functionality (Kufera, A. Webstaurantstore)

3.3.3 Noise and sound control

It goes without saying that there can be abundant sounds in restaurant. These sound may vary from the conversation of customers to employees' talking, from the sound of machines in the kitchen, for instance dishwasher, refrigerators or microwave, to heating and air conditioning system. It can also be the sound of the background music, or the noise coming from outside, and so on. Generally, people are not aware of these obvious sounds until they became disturbing and complaints start to appear (Katsigris & Thomas, 2009). However, a complete lacking of noise would be also uncomfortable and terrifying. Therefore, an appropriate balance between decent noise level so that customers can still notice yet feel comfortable to continue their conversation is necessary.

In order to achieve this, there are some strategies. Keeping the machines under adequate and frequent maintenance is usually underestimated, yet it is crucial to some extent. Using some tools to prevent the noise to be out of control can also be considered. Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 221) have argued that restaurants can use ceilings, walls, draperies and furnishings, carpets to help reduce the noise level.

- **Ceilings:** Using spray-on acoustic surfaces, acoustical tile, fiberglass panels padded with fabric, wooden slats, or perforated metal facings instead of plain plaster or concrete ceilings.
- **Walls:** Covering the walls with padding, fabric, or carpet and use portable partitions helps lower the noise level.
- **Draperies and furnishings:** Using fabric in different parts of the facility: the tables can be covered with a cloth, or chairs can be padded and so on.
- **Carpets:** Using carpets apparently helps in reducing noise such as the sound of broken plates and glasses.

Using music as a background sound and controlling the noise from kitchen should be considered. Besides ensuring that employees are trained to keep the talking and laughing in kitchen acceptable, it is reasonable to use other tactics, for instance using acoustical tile ceilings, or setting the dishroom in a remoted area, and so on. (Katsigris & Thomas, 2009).

3.3.4 HVAC - heating, air conditioning and ventilation

Heating, air conditioning and ventilation is usually acting as a tool to keep the place comfortable for employees and customers. This can also affect the mood of diners in different ways: hot rooms feel more crowded than colder ones, while half-empty restaurants with warm atmosphere will bring the feeling of more people in the room (Baraban & Durocher, 2010). As a result, choosing the appropriate HVAC system as well as operating it effectively and keeping it in a good shape is very important. Furthermore, the business has to consider environmental factors and energy saving features before giving the final decision. As Katsigris and Thomas (2009, 223) explained, indoor temperature, humidity, air movement, room surface temperature and air quality are the crucial factors regarding this issue. In order to customize listed factors, there should be several equipments. Furnaces (to provide hot air), boilers (to provide hot air), air conditioners (to provide cool air), chillers (to create cool air), fans (to create a flow in the air and eliminate it), ductwork (to move air), filters (to cleanse the air). This HVAC system must not only operate properly to bring comfort for customers, but also be variable to adapt when a change happens. This change can either come from crowding level or weather and climate. Separate and smaller system locating in different parts of the city is also an option that is popular in Europe (Katsigris & Thomas, 2009).

4 Methodology

During researching for the thesis, the author has decided to use different kinds of research methods. Besides using searching engines to collect essential data and information, other methods such as observation and benchmarking, and quantitative methods were used in order to have the most profound background knowledge.

4.1 Observation and benchmarking

Observation is a “systematic data collection approach” in which researchers need to use all of their senses to “examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2016). Cohen and Crabtree also argued that observation includes several factors: “prolonged engagement in a setting or social situation; clearly expressed, self-conscious notations of how observing is done; methodical and tactical improvisation in order to develop a full understanding of the setting of interest; imparting attention in ways that is in some sense ‘standardized’; recording one’s observations”. Meanwhile, McLeod (2015) supposed that observation is an apparent method in order to carry out any research, and there are different kinds of observation. They are “controlled observations”, “natural observations” and “participant observations”. Furthermore, observations can also be disclosed or undisclosed. In a disclosed observation, the participants are aware of the fact that they are observed. On the other hand, in a undisclosed observation, attendants’ real identity are kept unrevealed from the research subjects. Generally, observations are remarkably low-cost and practical to carry out and few resources are needed by the researcher. However, they can also be extremely time consuming and longitudinal.

Benchmarking was defined by Business Dictionary as “a measurement of the quality of an organization’s policies, products, programs, strategies, and so on., and their comparison with standard measurements, or similar measurements of its peers”. The goals of this method including several points: to discover what and where improvements are called for, to investigate how other organizations achieve their high performance levels, and to apply this information to improve performance. Similarly, according to John Reh (2017), it is the process of comparing one organization, operations, or processes against other organizations in the same industry or in the broader marketplace. It is a way of defining the best performance - whether in a specific firm, by a competitor or by a totally different industry. This information can later on be analysed to discover gaps in a company’s procedures in order to accomplish a competitive advantage.

From a business perspective, benchmarking can be applicable for any product, process, function or approach in business. Its role acts like a crucial element of continuous improvement and quality initiatives. In a research, benchmarking provides the researchers with abundant

information and data from any aspects. It helps not only in gathering data but also in analysing them. During investigating these information, the researchers can acknowledge several differences between the compared objects and then be able to make the most accurate conclusions or suggestions.

4.2 Quantitative

According to Cohen (1980), quantitative research is a research that involves experimental methods and statements, which are shown in figures. The meaning of quantitative research is to describe variables, to examine the connection between these variables and authenticate the cause-and-effect of the relation between variables (Burns & Grove 2005, 23). In other words, this research method quantifies the issue by generating numerical data. This kind of data can then be converted into practical statistics. Questionnaires are known to be the most popular kind of quantitative research, including different types. For instance, online surveys, traditional surveys, mobile surveys, website interceptors, online polls and so on. can all be considered questionnaires, or in other words, quantitative research (Wyse 2011). From another point of view, quantitative research is about asking people for their opinions in a structured way. After that, these information can be used to create statistics which might act as a guideline. In order to achieve trustworthy statistical results, it is essential to have a large number of respondents and ensure they represented for a majority of people.

Quantitative research is believed to be more reliable and objective than other research methods. One can also use statistics to make a conclusion about a finding. Additionally, it can test theories or hypotheses. However, usually it is not as specific as a result from qualitative data and hence, some information can be missed during the research process.

5 Empirical study

5.1 An overview of Vietnamese community in Finland

According to Tilastokeskus, or Statistics Finland's statistics on population structure (2016), every tenth of the persons aged 25 to 44 living permanently in Finland at the end of 2015 were foreigners. In metropolitan area or so-called Uusima, one in five of persons aged 25 to 44 were already of foreign background. In total, there were 339,925 persons with foreign background living permanently in Finland by the end of 2015, which occupies 6.2 per cent of the population. It is the obvious fact that Finland is becoming more international, especially in the metropolitan area including three big cities Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo. Among them, nearly 4.5 thousands are Vietnamese living in Finland, 8 thousands are Chinese and more than 7 thousands are Thai people. This figure below shows the number of foreigners in Finland based on country of citizenship.

Country of citizenship	2014	%	Annual change, %	2015	%	Annual change, %
Estonia	48 354	22,0	8,0	50 367	21,9	4,2
Russia	30 619	13,9	-0,4	30 813	13,4	0,6
Sweden	8 288	3,8	-1,1	8 174	3,6	-1,4
China	7 559	3,4	6,2	8 042	3,5	6,4
Somalia	7 381	3,4	-1,1	7 261	3,2	-1,6
Thailand	6 864	3,1	5,9	7 229	3,1	5,3
Iraq	6 795	3,1	7,0	7 073	3,1	4,1
India	4 728	2,2	8,1	4 992	2,2	5,6
Turkey	4 508	2,1	2,5	4 595	2,0	1,9
Viet Nam	3 993	1,8	11,1	4 552	2,0	14,0
United Kingdom	4 280	1,9	5,7	4 427	1,9	3,4
Germany	4 044	1,8	1,8	4 112	1,8	1,7
Poland	3 684	1,7	11,0	3 959	1,7	7,5
Afghanistan	3 527	1,6	10,1	3 741	1,6	6,1
Former Serbia and Montenegro	3 360	1,5	6,5	3 535	1,5	5,2
Others	71 691	32,6	8,4	76 893	33,5	7,3
Total	219 675	100	5,9	229 765	100	4,6

Figure 3 Foreigners in Finland by nationality

However, when considering population by language, it is shown that there are more than 8.2 thousands people speaking Vietnamese, 10.7 thousands people speaking Chinese, and 8.5 thousands Thai language speaker.

Population by language				
	2012	2013	2014	2015
Finnish	4,866,848	4,869,362	4,868,751	4,865,628
Swedish	290,977	290,910	290,747	290,161
Sami	1,900	1,930	1,949	1,957
Other languages:				
Russian	62,554	66,379	69,614	72,436
Estonian	38,364	42,936	46,195	48,087
Somali	14,769	15,789	16,721	17,871
English	14,666	15,570	16,732	17,784
Arabic	12,042	13,170	14,825	16,713
Kurdish	9,280	10,075	10,731	11,271
Chinese	8,820	9,496	10,110	10,722
Albanian	7,760	8,214	8,754	9,233
Persian	6,422	7,281	8,103	8,745
Thai	6,926	7,513	8,038	8,582
Vietnamese	6,549	6,991	7,532	8,273
Turkish	6,097	6,441	6,766	7,082
Spanish	5,470	6,022	6,583	7,025
German	5,792	5,902	6,059	6,168
Others	61,438	67,289	73,543	79,570
Total	5,426,674	5,451,270	5,471,753	5,487,308

Source: Statistics Finland, Population structure

Figure 4 Population by language

These figures show that as Finland become more and more international, the number of Asian people in general and Vietnamese people in specific is rising gradually and firmly. Since Asian culture becomes more popular, the attention for its cuisine also rises strongly. The attractiveness of this food culture does not only interests people with Asian background but also Finnish and foreigners with European background. This means golden opportunities for restaurant sector, particularly in Asian and Vietnamese food. The fact is that there is a remarkable number of Asian restaurants throughout Finland, in various cities, for instance Tampere, Kuopio, Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Lahti, Jyväskylä, and so on. However, to put a limitation to the research, from this sector, the writer only focuses on restaurants that are focused on Vietnamese cuisine and located in metropolitan area, specially in capital Helsinki.

5.2 Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki: current situation and future prospects

In order to investigate the current status of Asian oriented restaurants in Helsinki, the author used Google as a searching engine and use the outcome as a basement to evaluate the general situation. The table below shows the consequences.

Keyword	Number of results	Time (second)
Asian restaurants in Helsinki	453.000	0,66
Chinese restaurants in Helsinki	1.230.000	0,6
Japanese restaurants in Helsinki	281.000	0,75
Thai restaurants in Helsinki	580.000	0,21
Nepalese restaurants in Helsinki	70.000	0,8
Indian restaurants in Helsinki	605.000	0,49
Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki	156.000	0,48

Table 3 Results for Asian oriented restaurants when using Google

From the table, when using Google to look for Vietnamese food, it is shown that there are not so many restaurants in Helsinki. With the keyword 'Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki', there are approximately 156.000 results in 0,48 second. On the other hand, when searching for Thai food with the keyword 'Thai restaurants in Helsinki', there are about 580.000 result in just 0,21 second. Specially, for 'Chinese restaurants in Helsinki', there are 1.230.000 result in 0,6 second. This indicates apparently the current circumstance for Asian cuisine in Helsinki. Chinese food acts as the most familiar food culture for Finnish people. With an impressive number of service providers, Thai food is also one of the most popular food in metropolitan area. Simultaneously, with a quite modest figure of nearly 156.000 results, which is roughly 3.7 times less than the number of results for Thai restaurants, and 7.8 times less than Chinese restaurants, Vietnamese cuisine is much less well-known compared to the two other great cuisine. Additionally, when looking for Vietnamese restaurants from different sources, the same

result is found. For instance, on Tripadvisor website, the keyword ‘Vietnamese restaurant’ only gives 15 results, while ‘Thai restaurant’ does provide more than twice of that (about 32 restaurants). It is evident that Viet food is not actually common for Helsinki citizens. This can be both the advantage and disadvantage for entrepreneurs with the intention to focus on Vietnamese cuisine. However, to define the prospect of Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki, also by using the result from Google searching engine with the same keyword ‘Vietnamese rautaurants in Helsinki’, the author has explored results as shown in the table below:

Period of time	Number of results	Time (second)
1/1/2012 - 31/12/2012	2730	0,51
1/1/2013 - 31/12/2013	3220	0,54
1/1/2014 - 31/12/2014	4170	0,55
1/1/2015 - 31/12/2015	6080	0,52
1/1/2016 - 31/12/2016	9990	0,67
1/1/2017 - 3/4/2017	2490	0,52

Table 4 The outcomes when looking for Vietnamese restaurants during different period of times

From the figures above, it is evident that as time goes by, the number of search result for the same keyword ‘Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki’ is rising gradually. In 2012, there were only 2730 results, however, the number has increased noticeably over the next years, and in 2016, there were already 9990 results when looking for a place selling Vietnamese food. This has proved that Vietnamese cuisine is becoming more and more popular for Helsinki people.

By all means, Vietnamese cuisine can not be as attractive as others, such as Chinese or Thai food, and because of this limited reputation, it might be challenging for any startup when starting to creating impression for customers. However, the minor number of places with the same orientation means that in this sector, there are not many rivals. Hence, the competition is less fierce than, for instance, opening a Chinese restaurant. Furthermore, as the table above has illustrated, there are promising signs for the development of Viet cuisine in Helsinki which encourages a positive future for startups.

5.3 Observation and benchmarking

The benchmarking will be focused in four most famous restaurant mentioned in previous part. They are Vibami, Viet’s Top, Asian Aroma and Ônam (the names’ order does not base on any criteria). In order to find out the best result in comparison between different Vietnamese restaurant in Helsinki, it is necessary to go through each restaurant’s identical characteristics. Each following section describes the most outstanding findings.

5.3.1 Vibami

Banh Mi is one of the most delicious and popular Vietnamese dishes for cuisine lovers from all over the world. As Wikipedia explains, it is the result of French colonialism in Vietnam decades ago. The ingredients are from the French cuisine (baguettes, pâté, jalapeño, and mayonnaise) and native Vietnamese ingredients, for instance coriander, cucumber, and pickled carrots and white radish. The integration of two great culinary backgrounds has created a unique and unforgettable taste. This is the reason why despite being a very young startup that has only been operating for less than one year, Vibami is currently one of the most popular restaurant. Their success was resulted partly from being the only Banh Mi provider. Besides their authentic Banh Mi (also called Vietnamese sandwich), Bun Bo (beef noodle), Pho, and Bun Thit Nuong (rice vermicelli with grilled pork). Located in Iso Roobertinkatu 3-5, which can be easily accessed through tram 3, 6 and 10 from the central railway station or 12 minutes of walking, the restaurant is a small and cozy place with the dining area approximately 35m². Most customers have the same opinion that the place has a comfortable and quiet atmosphere. The silence is mostly due to the fact that the business is on a small alley which stays far from the main roads. These pictures below show the general appearance of the space.



Figure 5 Vibami - glass wall looking to the street



Figure 6 Vibami - coffee station



Figure 7 Vibami - lighting and decoration 1



Figure 8 Vibami - lighting and decoration 2



Figure 9 Vibami - heating system

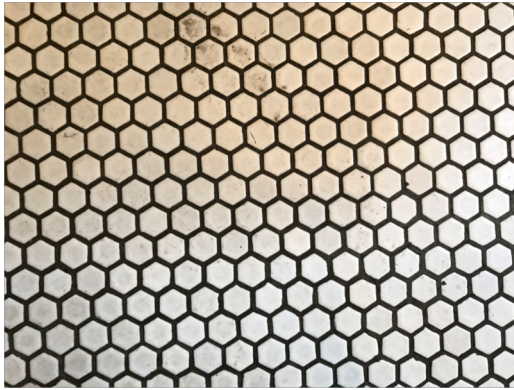


Figure 10 Vibami - floor material

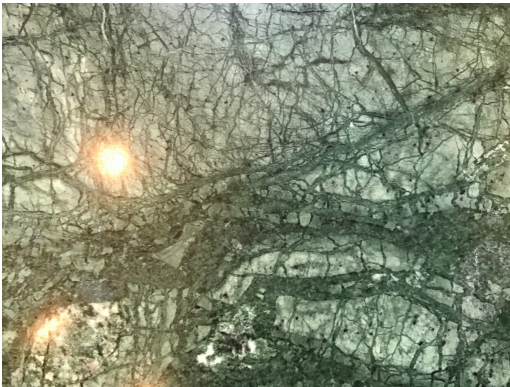


Figure 11 Vibami - table material



Figure 12 Vibami - chair material

As from pictures above, it can be seen that the restaurant owns a modern appearance with a theme color is green. The lime wall is also in green, with the bottom of the walls tiled in white. There are heaters on the bottom of the walls, which might be the reason why the temperature is at a very good stage (figure 8). The floor is also tiled with small white hexagonal plates (figure 9). There are about 6-8 tables in the dining area, which is able to occupy 15-20 people. The light level is marvelous due to a numbers of light bulbs from the ceiling and the existence of a glass wall near the main door (figure 6-7). Tables are made from stones with a dark color tone, and chairs are made from blue pastel wooden (figure 10-11). There are several cushions on the table near the glass wall as shown in figure 4, which can bring a touch of

softness and comfort to consumers while enjoying the food. The aisle is decent and there is also a coffee station (figure 5) by the main door for customers. The lavatory located between kitchen area and dining area has a clean image and pleasant scent, however inadequate light level.

5.3.2 Viet's Top

Also a young business, even younger than Vibami, Viet's Top is developing strongly and steadily. The restaurant is based in Myyrmanni shopping center near Myyrmäki, a train station in Vantaa. Despite not operating in Helsinki region, the author still decided to choose the restaurant as one of the objects in benchmarking process due to the popularity of the business in Vietnamese community. Its reputation comes from smart marketing strategy, also in the quality of service provided, including the variety of menu and its excellent buffet. Special sale for a specific dish in every week is also one strengths of the restaurant, not to mention the freshness of ingredients and unbeatable price. There has been a lot of compliments for the brand and it is undoubtedly that the place owns a promising prospect. Considering accessibility, it is not difficult to visit the place since there are usually regular commuter train travels to the train station. This might also be one of the reasons for the continuously rising number of customers coming to the restaurant regardless of the location. The designing of Viet's Top is also one of the noteworthy points, which is illustrated by the following figures.



Figure 13 Viet's Top - bench and banister



Figure 14 Viet's Top - cashier



Figure 15 Viet's Top - buffet station



Figure 16 Viet's Top - interior design



Figure 17 Viet's Top - table material



Figure 18 Viet's Top - long bench's material



Figure 19 Viet's Top - long bench

The general impression when entering the restaurant is a clean, wide and bright space with adequately colorful decoration. Being established in second floor of the building has brought to the place, especially tables near the banister, a marvelous view to the sight downstairs. Two large television screen installed on the top of the wall behind cashier stall displays constantly marketing videos for Vietnamese food in general and Viet's Top in specific (figure 13). Buffet station is placed near the banister and next to the kitchen. The open space together with ventilation system of Myrmani building keep the place in an airy and spacious status. There is a harmony in the structure of furniture and design of the restaurant. The brown wooden floor goes along well with long benches in dark grey and dark orange, simultaneously white tables and yellow chairs provide a slight contrast to the luminous orange lamp shades on the ceiling of the area (figure 15). The table is made from the same material for floor: laminated wood, but in cream color (figure 16). The long bench mattress' material is felt cloth with dark orange color (figure 17), while other chairs in the space is originated from colored wood.

5.3.3 Asian Aroma

When mentioning Vietnamese cuisine, besides Banh Mi, there is also another extremely outstanding dish which is already mentioned above. It is Pho, a is a Vietnamese noodle soup with special broth that is cooked in at least few hours, rice noodles named *bánh phở*, herbs, and meat, usually beef or chicken. There are a lot of restaurants selling Pho in all over the world because of its popularity. Hence, it is not a surprise when all Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki provide this unique dish. Asian Aroma is one of them. The restaurant sells also other dishes, however, Pho is predictably the most attractive for consumers. Being famous for serving probably the best Pho in town, the restaurant has received many positive feedbacks. This is also because of the reasonable price and friendly attitude of staffs. However, the restaurant is located 1.6 kilometers to the north of Sörnäinen station, which is quite far away from the central railway stations. In order to enjoy a hot and delicious bowl of Pho, one must travel at least 15 minutes by car and 20 minutes by public transportation.



Figure 20 Asian Aroma - glass walls & lime wall



Figure 21 Asian Aroma - decoration reliefs



Figure 22 Asian Aroma - wooden reliefs 2



Figure 23 Asian Aroma - ventilation

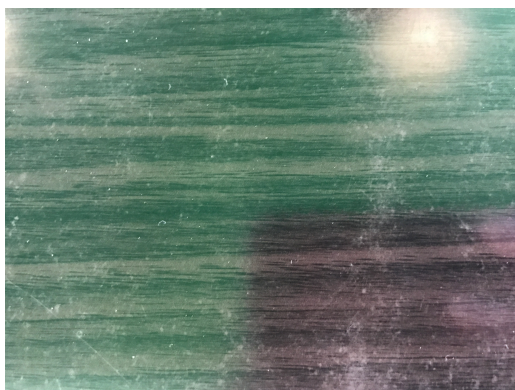


Figure 24 Asian Aroma - table material

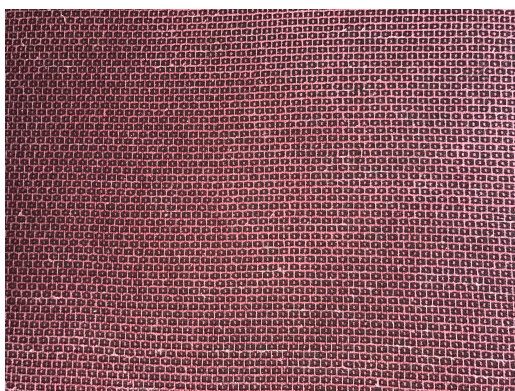


Figure 25 Asian Aroma - chair material

Also choose green as the theme color, however, Asian Aroma has a totally different interior design compared to Vibami. The restaurant is decorated strongly in Asian style, or to be more specific, in Vietnamese style. With 7 tables, the dining area can occupy more than 30 people. The area is almost 40 square meters with very good lighting levels, since there are glass walls and also several light bulbs in ceiling. The green lime wall is half tiled, and there are a number of wooden reliefs hanging on the wall which is extremely a traditional thing of Vietnamese people. Different wooden reliefs with dissimilar style and pattern, together, they has created a strong impression about an Asian-oriented restaurant for any visitors. Not only the reliefs, the lampshades also expectedly leave an image in customers' mind. According to the owner, these lampshades are handmade and decorated with lotus pattern, which is the national flower of Vietnam. As shown in figures, the tables of restaurant are made from laminated wood in dark brown while the chairs are padded with molfino fabric. The colors for table and chairs are genuinely uninteresting, however they are firm and convenient. Ventilation and decent aisle help diners to experience certain comfort during their meals. On the other hand, for welfare arrangement, the water closet is also spacious although the lighting level inside is inadequate.

5.3.4 Ônam

Among four restaurants, Ônam might be the most attractive one for Finnish people in general because of many reasons. First of all, Ônam possesses a pricey location which is in Forum shopping center - one of the most crowded centers in Helsinki which is just few minutes walking from the central railway station. This indicates that customers does not need to travel further in order to have an experience with Vietnamese food, they can go shopping on a free-day and stop by the restaurant to enjoy themselves. Secondly, Ônam's dining area is notable broad with exceptionally splendid decoration. The interior design is vigorously affected by the layout that is commonly seen in Vietnamese restaurant. However, it is much more modern, colorful and impressive than Asian Aroma. These figures below will support this statement.



Figure 26 Ônam - looking from outside



Figure 27 Ônam - decoration 1



Figure 28 Tết - decoration 2



Figure 29 Tết - decoration 3



Figure 30 Tết - wall decoration



Figure 31 Tết - wall decoration 2



Figure 32 Ônam - trolley



Figure 33 Ônam - chair material



Figure 34 Ônam - table material 1



Figure 35 Ônam - table material 2

There are a few issues when considering Ônam's dining area planning. First of all, the temperature is quite low, giving customers a cold and unpleasant feeling. This can be explained by the fact that the restaurant is an open space, and also the heating system might not operate adequately. The most special thing about the decoration is that lighting level is high - the place is illuminated by countless light bulbs, with very nice lampshades in different colors. Another unique point is these lampshades actually imitating Vietnamese fishing men's traditional fishing equipments. In the middle of the dining area, there is a trolley which resembles the conventional one of the farmers. The trolley acts as both a decorative point and a bulkhead for corner tables' privacy. The concrete wall and grey stone floor create also a cold feeling for customers. Several tables and chairs are set up in the space. There are tall wooden tables go together with tall colorful iron chairs, and also the stone-color-painted wooden tables with smaller chairs. The space is not so quiet since it is located inside a big building, however there are usually small tables in the corners for special request.

5.3.5 An overview

In general, each of the restaurants owns a unique design concept and space arrangement with various advantages as well as disadvantages. Hence, there would be different impressions for customers who come to the place. The table below summarize the most outstanding characteristics about various fields of those restaurants.

Features	Vibami	Viet's Top	Asian Aroma	Ônam
Location evaluation	Good	Fair	Fair	Very good
Distance from central railway station	1,2km	14km	4,9km	1,3km
Accessibility (from central railway station)	- By public transportation: 11 minutes by tram 3, 6 and 10 and 4 minutes walking - By walk: 12 minutes	- By car: 26 minutes - By public transportation: 19 minutes (P train)	- By car: 16 minutes - By public transportation: 16 minutes, by bus or tram 6T	- By walk: 5 minutes
Noise level	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Indoor design	Modern design with green color as a theme color	Modern, bright and colorful	Asian & Vietnamese style with green color as a	Modern with Vietnamese traditional decora-

			theme color	tive details
Lighting level	Good	Very good	Good	Good
Temperature control	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Wall & floor material	Lime wall and tiled floor	Wooden floor and open space	Lime wall and stone floor	Concrete wall and grey stone floor
Table & chair material	Dark-toned stone tables and blue pastel wooden chairs	Cream laminated wooden tables, felt cloth long bench and wooden chairs	Laminated wood for tables and molfino fabric padded chairs	Wooden table and colorful iron chairs
Aisle	Narrow	Decent	Good	Good
Welfare arrangement (lavatory)	Clean with pleasant scent yet inadequate light level	No	Decent with inadequate light level	Clean and bright

Table 5 Summary of benchmarking

5.4 Survey and result analysis

5.4.1 The survey

The survey provides readers with two pictures from different restaurants which is shown below:



Figure 36 Survey - option 1



Figure 37 Survey - option 2



Figure 38 Lanterns in ancient town, Hoi An city

As can be seen from the pictures, the first one (option 1) expresses more elegance and simplicity than the other one. This is also suitable for restaurants with limited area. The most special and Vietnamese-oriented in this place is the patchwork tiles with neutral toned colors and the colorful lampshades on the ceiling. Encaustic cement tiles are originated from Viviers, France in 1800s. During the Vietnam war, French people has brought this simple yet elegant design to their colony, and since then it has developed strongly and became a significant part of interior design and architecture in Vietnam for decades . In the past few years, bringing back the memory about encaustic cement tiles with random arrangement has become a famous trend in Vietnam and also in the world for its magnificence. The colorful lampshades are a part of Vietnamese tradition, which might be inspired by the lanterns that are usually made in ancient town, Hoi An city (figure 37). The elegant and vintage style of this design might attract mostly people without Asian backgrounds.

On the other hand, the second picture (option 2) shows a different style, which is colorful and creative space with the decorated wall acting as a highlight in design. The design would not be suitable for restaurants with modest dining area but large space in order to feature the prominence of the wall. It is certain that any Vietnamese customers would be surprised and delighted when seeing the content on this wall. Images about the traditional costume, and phrases in Vietnamese language are impressive and also bring a refreshing feeling. It is anticipated that the Vietnamese people would pay more attention to the second option since the home-like feeling that it brings.

5.4.2 Survey result

The survey was conducted in two days, 10th April and 11th April. After two days, there were 75 respondents, mostly Finnish and Vietnamese. Others come from China, France, Germany, and so on. These charts below show detailed result of the survey:

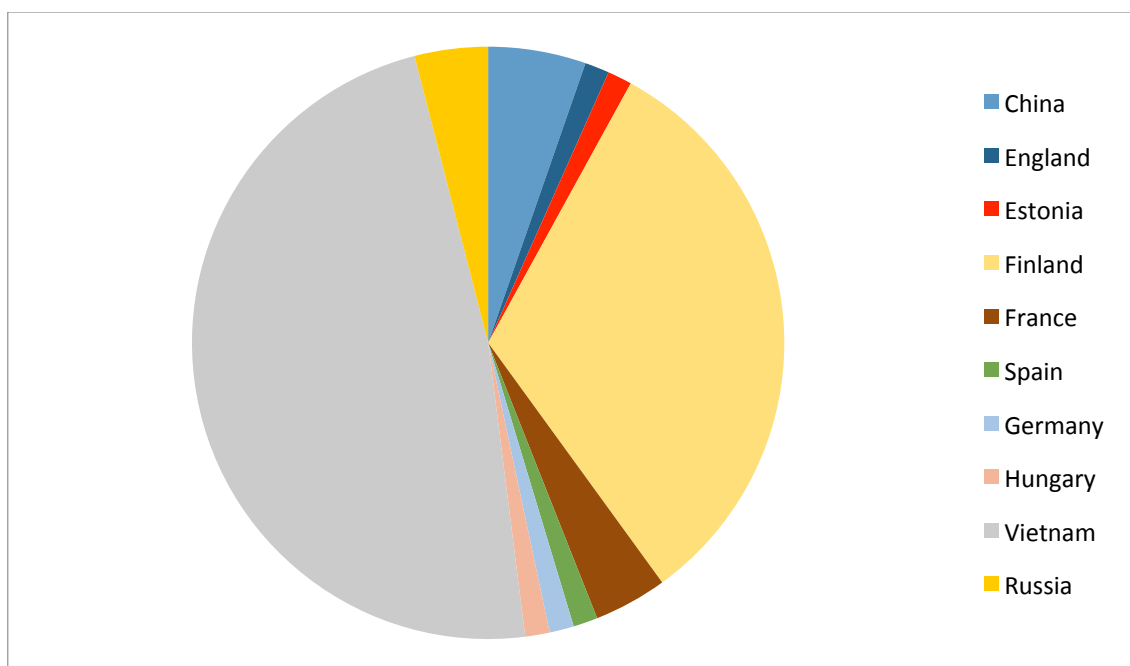


Figure 39 Origin of respondents

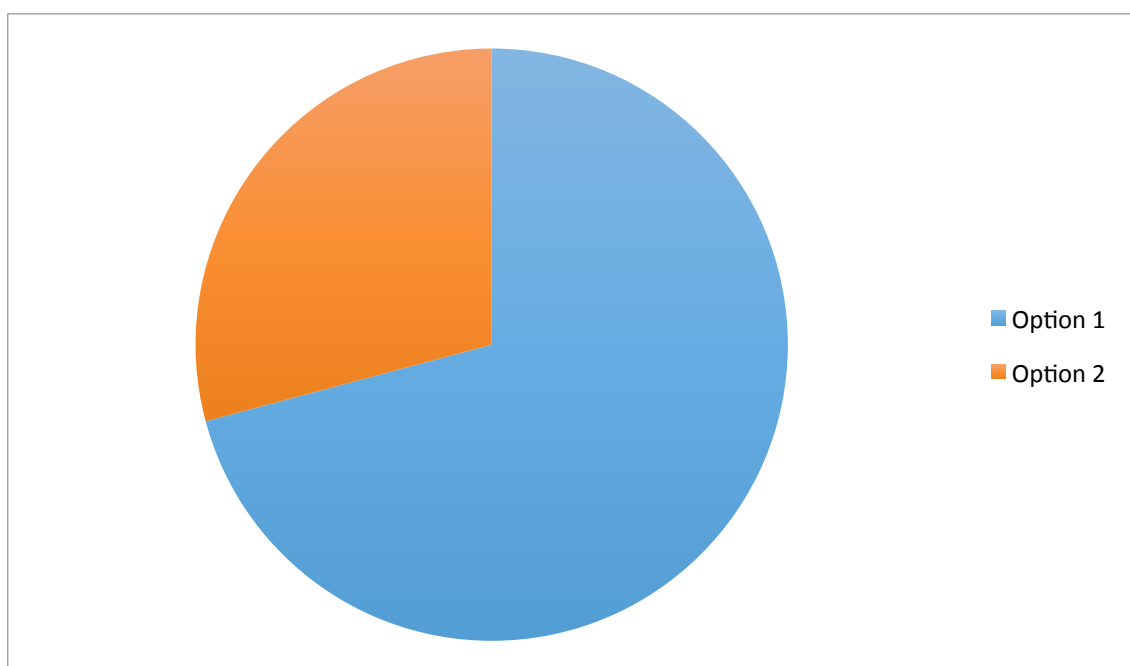


Figure 40 Finnish respondents' decision

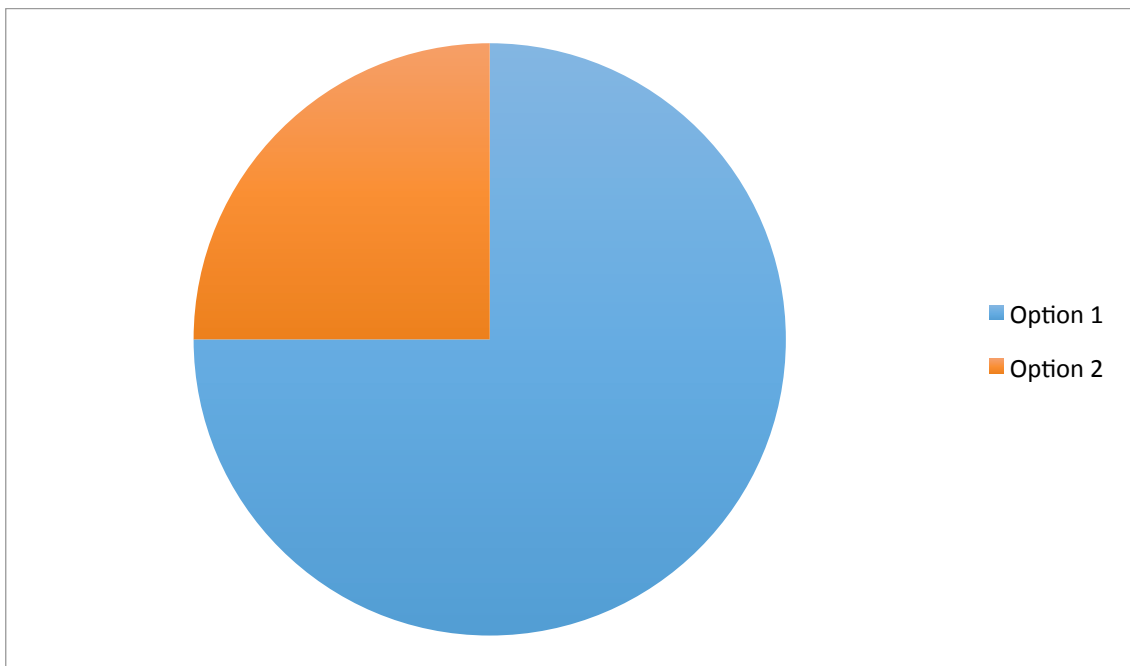


Figure 41 Vietnamese respondents' decision

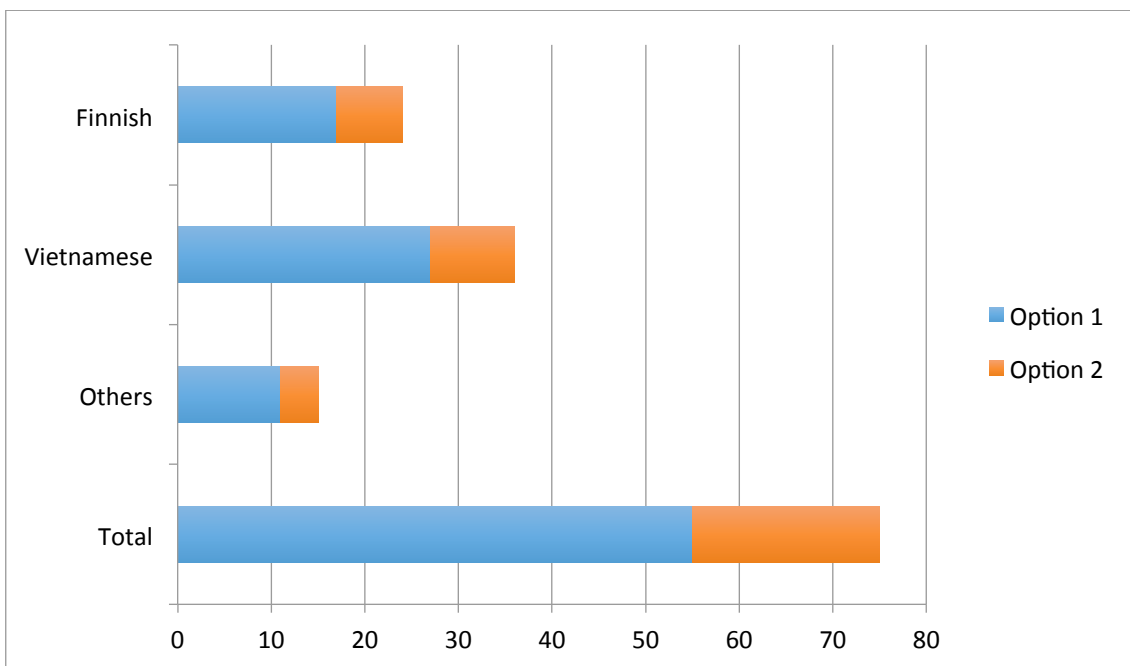


Figure 42 Selection of different groups of respondents in general

According to the diagrams, it is apparent that a majority of respondents have chosen the first option as their preference. In total, there were only 20 people showed their interest with the second picture, which occupies 27%, meanwhile the rest 55 people equalling 73%, decided that they preferred the first one. As expected, almost all Finnish respondents were attracted by the simple and elegance of the the first design. Among 24 Finnish people who participated

in the survey, 17 people would like to spend time in the first restaurant (71%), which is completely higher than those with the second option (only 7 people - 29%). Surprisingly, contrary to the anticipation, most of Vietnamese respondents also pay more attention to the first design despite understanding the highlight of the decorative wall in the other space. There were 27 Vietnamese people selected option 1, which covers 75%, however only 9 people wanted to go in the second one, which occupies the rest 25%. For respondents originated from other countries than Vietnam and Finland, there were 1 Hungarian, 1 German, 1 Estonian, 3 French, 3 Russian, 1 English, 1 Spanish and 4 Chinese people. Among these 15 respondents, there were only 4 people think that the second option looks better. The rest 11 people share the same view that they would appreciate the first space.

5.4.3 Result analysis

Among 75 respondents, 44 people explained the reasons for their choice. The table below show specifically what they are. All of them are kept originally as the respondents answered, only translation if needed.

Decision	Explanation
OPTION 1	<p>Cái thứ 2 nhìn trẻ con và sơ sài quá. Nếu kinh doanh thì cái 2 khả năng thu hút độ tuổi nhỏ, khoảng dưới 25 vì điểm thu hút chính là cái tường có vẽ hình cũng khá ấn tượng, vì lạ mà bàn ghế sơ sài, không gian public quá như quán nước vỉa hè vậy nên nhiều khả năng người ta tới để chụp hình post các kiểu là hết, ít có khả năng quay lại lần 2. Cái 1 nhìn đẹp và sang trọng, không gian cũng riêng tư hơn, là nơi thích hợp để hẹn hò, hội họp (họp lớp chẳng hạn), và sinh viên học bài nữa. Hơn nữa, không gian nhìn tiện nghi nếu thêm phần phục vụ và chăm sóc khách hàng tốt nữa thì thu hút nhiều độ tuổi và tầng lớp trong xã hội hơn. Không gian sang trọng cũng có thể thu hút những người trung niên và những người kinh doanh đến bàn bạc công việc.</p> <p>(Translation: The second one looks a bit untidy and childish. It might attract the children and young people under 25 years old, because the highlight is the wall which is quite impressive. However, the space is too open, feeling like a coffee vendor, people might come to take a picture and then they might not come back again. The first one looks nice and classy, more private, it is suitable for dating, meeting, and studying. If the services are good also, it will attract different people from different social classes and ages. These kinds of places might also attract mid-aged people and businessmen to come and discuss their business).</p>
	Classical, cosy
	Cleaner & trendier

	Cozier
	Feel peaceful
	Feels more cost and authentic
	I like it
	I like the classic style. Option is cool too but i think it somehow looks childish, so i choose option 1
	I like the decoration
	Interior seems more peaceful. I like it since there are not so many bright colors, I love the wooden interior generally too. It makes the appearance more "dignified". I think that the colorful chairs in Option 2 makes it look like little bit "cheap" :)
	it is more elegant
	It look more comfortable when you want to relax
	It looks more nicer than the other
	It looks organized so I like it better
	It's more well organised, simple and comfortable.
	Look comfortable, stylish and free
	Looks "Cleaner" and more professional
	Looks cozier and higher-quality kind of restaurant
	more asian
	more confortable, too much on the other one
	more cozy
	More mature, comfortable to the eyes, classy, higher end, because I'm a rich badass boy... :P your questions should have included age and professional situation. I believe younger generations / students will like option 2 better while working people would like option 1 better ;)
	More professional
	Simple
	The black and white colors
	the second one looks empty and the first one cozier
	Trông hiện đại và phối màu hợp lý (Translation: it looks modern and owns rational color scheme)
	Vintage is always better, isn't it?
	With the wooden materials, it makes me feel relaxed
OPTION 2	Fresher
	I chose the second one because of the tables. However, the atmosphere on the first picture is perfect for a restaurant . The combination of these two would be a perfect choice for me (design from the first picture and

	tables from the second)
	I like art street style so that I prefer that style decoration in the wall and open space with bright vibe.
	I love simple and creative style
	Im usually eating with friends so I prefer the kind of table that i can face the person im eating with. The design appeals me tho, in the first pic.
	It seems like a more open space and easier to carry on a face to face conversation
	More aisan
	More asian
	more modern
	More space and fresh look
	more unique
	Seems more welcoming and colorful.
	Tables are better organized than the other one, because with these tables you can see the others' faces
	The colorful and lively space will make me much more relaxed whenever I drink here
	The first image has no tables for people to sit together. Not a good place to meet people.

Table 6 Explanation for each respondent's selection

Most respondents selecting the first option argue that the space is more relaxing, peaceful, cleaner, trendier. Some think that it is cozier, more classic and vintage, more elegant, and create the feeling about a higher end restaurant. Wooden tables and chairs are also a strength that people have noticed. However, several respondents have paid attention to the fact that the restaurant is a small area with no face-to-face table so that customers who usually eat out with friends are able to observe the person sitting opposite to them. This is also the reason why they decided that the open and fresh atmosphere of the second option is more suitable. Besides, some people also pointed out that the place is lively, colorful and creative. Nonetheless, the two spaces own absolutely contrasting concepts. The first one is more likely to serve premium customers with normal to fine dining, meanwhile the other one perfectly suits, for instance the street food and quick services. Therefore, it would not be objective to assert that one is nicer than the other, and the respondents' opinions are indeed the very first impression despite knowing anything about the concept of the restaurant.

However, it is indeed purposeful that the author set up the two options without any explanation about the idea. This is due to the fact that generally, the first impression comes from the appearance and design of the restaurant, even before understanding the concept of it. Usually, when walking past by a restaurant, the interior design is more likely to be the initial factor to attract one's eyes. Hence, the more attractive the decoration is, the higher chance that customers would decide to go inside regardless of not knowing the true meaning of the design. From the survey result, it is relatively apparent that in order to attract the customers from the first sight, the first space is more appealing. This asserts the fact that elegance, classic and simple style generally suits more customers, especially in European countries, in this situation Finland. Furthermore, Finnish people, who are usually considered as quiet, shy and introverted (VisitFinland.fi), seem to prefer the "calm, muted tones of pale blue, cool grey, white and cream, which are the neutral colors" which has become one of the most outstanding traits about Scandinavian design (Little, 2014). It is comprehensible that the first option is more interested in.

Nevertheless, there are still drawbacks in both options. The first option, as mentioned above, for instance has the unreasonable arrangement of tables and chairs, and the limited area. The second one is less favorable despite owning an open space and better establishment of tables and chairs. The best solution that can be proposed is, in fact, to combine the advantages of the two alternatives and form one space that suits the Finnish style of interior design but still keeps the spacious and airy atmosphere.

5.5 Space designing: detailed plan

5.5.1 Location selection

Since the business is a new one and its concept is unfamiliar to Finns, a good location will bring more advantages in advertising and encouraging people to try. The ideal location should be either near the centre or inside a shopping mall that attracts customers. The area is expected not to be extremely narrow since tables and chairs need space to be nicely arranged.

By searching through internet, the author has found out the website toimitilat.fi. This website provides information about available spaces for rent. There are various kinds of space: commercial space, office space, warehouse space, and so on. With the criterias mentioned, the author has found a few possible places. After evaluating the results found, the author has decided to choose a retail space located in Itäkeskus shopping centre (link: <https://goo.gl/dFft2H>), which is approximately 80m². This place is a suitable option due to many reasons. Firstly, it is located inside one of the biggest and most crowded shopping centre in Finland. This means that there is more opportunity to have walk in customers, who are actually coming to Itäkeskus for shopping. Additionally, it is not difficult to access to the mall: only 24 minutes by metro from central railway station, and 14 to 26 minutes by car. It is also possible to travel by bus, depending on the starting location of the customers. Furthermore, a crucial point is that the area is extremely spacious, which indicates that the tenant have a certain comfort while arranging the space without having to worry about the narrow area. Hence, this can be considered a perfect location for a new business.

5.5.2 Indoor design selection

Based on the theory of interior design and the result of survey, the author understands that it is better to combine Scandinavian's most outstanding design characteristics and Vietnamese-oriented traits. Ideally, special features regarding Vietnamese decoration and culture should act as the highlights on the neutral, calm interiors. In order to achieve that accomplishment, several factors have to be considered and chosen carefully.

Basically, since most people prefer the first option (as shown in the survey in previous pages), the author has decided to keep the most splendid things, in this case, the encaustic cement tiles and the colorful lampshades. However, as some respondents have noticed, the area is rather small and the arrangement of tables and chairs is not the most effective. Additionally, one of the most special thing about hot pot is that people should enjoy and share it with their friends or families. Therefore, structure in the second option is more suitable and useful since it allows more customers to sit in one table, and they can see each other's face. Details about the design and pictures as examples are listed below. Some figures are made with

Planner 5D application, in order to basically visualize the idea. This is expected to provide readers with a more specific and apparent perspectives.

- **Theme color**

As explained previously in theory chapter, the theme color for the restaurant should be light and neutral. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, Scandinavian design mostly prefer calm colors, for instance grey, beige, pale blue, white, and cream. Secondly, since the light color scheme will make the area feel wider and more airy, as well as bring to the customers a relaxed and comfortable feeling, it would be more reasonable for a small startup with limited dining area and casual dining style.

- **Doors**

Purposefully, all the front doors would be in glass. This is to ensure that a part of the customers can observe the main traits of the interior design and have their first impression. If they are interested, they will walk in to feel the warmth inside the space. The glass doors also let them know how occupied the restaurant is at that moment; hence, they can make their decisions quickly without having to enter the territory. Through the glass, it is also possible for customers within the area to have a look at outside vision, which is usually enjoyable. In general, the glass doors is usually chosen by restaurants designers. It is expected to be effective and the see-through glass door would contribute as one of the factors that draw customers' attention.

- **General structure**

When entering the space, the first thing customers will see is the cashier located at a wooden stall. This cashier stall continues as a countertop. The remaining space of the restaurant is filled with round-shaped tables for diners coming as a group and and some comfortable seatings in the right corner (as shown from the figures).



Figure 43 The general structure of the restaurant



Figure 44 View from outside

- Floor

As mentioned above, encaustic cement tiles can be chosen as the structure of the floor. Due to the theme color, it might be better to choose light blue color or neutral colors. The most special thing lies in the arrangement of the tiles: they would be done randomly, or in other words, as a patchwork. The patchwork should be ensured that its color is not too bright yet in muted tones; parallelly, still it owns a certain harmony and does not look untidy. Hexagon tiles or square tiles can be used. Square tiles are more familiar and classic, while hexagon tiles are less well-known but they are becoming one of the most popular trend in interior design, as mentioned in previous chapters. Examples can be found below.



Figure 45 Hexagon encaustic cement tiles in light blue tone



Figure 46 Square encaustic cement tiles in beige tone

- **Walls**

A shade of light beige, grey, or light blue can be applied. Plaster, or concrete material might be suitable for the restaurant.

- **Tables and chairs**

The structure for tables and chairs is explained in figure 42 and the following figure.



Figure 47 View from the counter

As can be seen, the author decided to set up three kinds of tables and chairs. The first one, located in the middle of room, is round wooden tables with wooden padded chairs, which is suitable for a group of 4-6 people. It is true that hot pot is a kind of food that is meant to share and enjoy with friends and relatives, and with a round-shaped table, sharing the meal or sharing the story would be much easier and nicer. This shape helps enhance the intimacy and develop the conversation between everyone, since they can see all others' faces without turning their head too much. The other kind of seating is the rectangular tables, expectedly to be made from light wood, with benches around, which can be described as the booth. This is suitable for 3-4 people who prefer more privacy and coziness since it is situated at the corner of the room and the padded booth seating is undoubtedly comfortable. Opposite to these booths is the tall wooden counter mentioned in the "main structure" part. The counter served as a long table and several stools are set up next to this area so that customers who come by themselves might have a chance to enjoy the privacy. Behind this booth is a part of the kitchen and it is separated with the rest of the area by a glass window. The glass plate, located on top of the bar (not shown in pictures), aims in showing customers some phases of the cooking process in case they are interested, and ensure that people who is eating alone would not feel completely solitude.

- **Lighting level**

Since the concept of the restaurant's design is cozy and comfortable, lighting level should not be too bright and colorful. A more moderate level with yellow light would be more relevant. However, the author decided to set up more light bulbs to ensure the lighting level but still keep the space in its theme. Different kinds of lampshades can be applied. The ones staying on the right side of the room (above the booths) are inspired by the lanterns in Vietnam. As mentioned above, the author keeps this detail since she believes that its appearance is attractive and it will add a touch of Vietnamese culture. The other ones are arranged into two parallel lines, above the counter and the big round tables. The lampshades are made from metal with hexagon or geometric design (illustration below).



Figure 48 Example for lampshade

- **Decoration**



Figure 49 Example for hexagon wooden shelves as decorative factor

Since hexagon is anticipated to be the trend in interior design in the year 2016 and 2017, the author has decided to use the hexagon shelves on the wall. Small items such as flowers, books, and so on. might participate as the decorative factors together with the shelves. However, there can be a chance that practically the shelves does not blend well in the total appearance. Hence, there can be other options for decoration. Another possible idea is some decorative pillows to put on the padded seating of the booths. These cushions can alternate between dark and light colors, possibly simple patterned, in order to create a total harmony in color. Meanwhile, they ought to be also absolutely soft and comfortable.

- **Heating system**

Hot pot is a warm food, and as explained the restaurant tends to have warm look and feeling. Regarding the fact that the food is at high temperature, therefore, it is not necessary to keep the area in too warm atmosphere. The heating system should stay at either decent or somewhat lower than normal, since the boiling pot is expected to be the factor to bring to customers the warmth and comfort. Especially, when the restaurant is full, it is good to keep the temperature low, since it will make the diners feel more fresher and erase the feeling of a too crowded place.

- **Welfare arrangement**

Welfare arrangement here states the lavatory. As an obvious thing, the lavatory should stay in clean and tidy status. However, the light level is also one of the important factors, especially for female customers. Usually for a woman, the lavatory is not only for basic demand but also for taking a look at her appearance: clothes, hair and makeup. Therefore, the lighting level is a crucial point. Furthermore, indecent lighting level will also affect to the general impression about the restroom. Usually, it makes the room look less clean and neat. In general, lighting can be moderate in the dining area, yet when it comes to the lavatory, it has to be between satisfying and excellent status.

- **Electrical socket**

Electrical socket is not a mandatory factor during planning a space. However, nowadays, smartphones and smart devices, for instance tablets, laptops and smart watches, are under heavy use most of the time. Hence, the need for charging those devices is remarkably high, especially for young customers. Based on this observations, the author has decided that there should be electrical sockets locating on the walls of the restaurant to meet the customer's needs at any time. These electrical sockets can stay in the booth's wall and there should be no more than two for each table.

- **Noise level control**

Due to the layout of restaurant, the place might face a risk of noise pollution in the counter where there is customer sitting and seeing a part of the kitchen as explained above. Therefore, a noise prevention glass is necessary to avoid any distractions from the kitchen. Employees also must be trained to control the noise level of any talking or laughing during the working hours.

6 Usability of the plan

This chapter describes the functionality of the space and focuses on the most visible functions. The space planning is convenient for both customers and employees in different ways.

The space planning is convenient for both customers and employees in different ways. For customers, they can observe the main food served as well as the interior before they make their decisions whether to enter or not. For instance, if the customers have decided to go inside and enjoy, they can usually order the food from the cashier and after that choose where to sit and wait for their meal. The see-through glass can even let the consumers decide their desired tables before they enter the place. There are different kind of seatings and customers can find the most suitable one for them. Padded chairs would bring comfortable seating for everyone. While waiting for the food to be served, there are certain things customers can do. The decoration of the space: the light, lampshades, walls, floors can act as a photographic point which can attract customers' attention for a short time. People can also use the

electrical sockets to charge their electronic devices and so on. After having served with the food, they can enter the lavatory with a comfortable feeling, especially for female customers.

For the employees, when customers enter the restaurant and place their order, it is easy for cashier to convey these information to the kitchen and after that deliver them to the table. One of the most convenient points is that they have enough space to move and bring the food for the customers. They must carry the food carefully, as a matter of fact, however on the other hand they do not have to worry too much since the room has enough space to ensure that there might not be any accident. Decent aisle not only let workers to deliver the products easily but also help them to take a quick general look around the space to determine whether consumers might need their help in anything. Cement tiles ensure that there will not be any extreme dirt, and the worker do not have to put so many effort to clean it. Wooden tables and counter also make it easier to clean. Padded chairs would not be simple for the workers when they are dirty yet the dark color of these chairs might prevent the apparently visible dirt and marks.

7 The potential of the detailed plan

Based on a profound study from various sources, both online and printed, the author has achieved a vast amount of acknowledgements about interior design and regarding issues, from different kinds of materials and their effect, to the variety of color schemes and their meaning, or the arrangements of furniture and decorative elements. Additionally, information about Asian culture and cuisine was also studied well. From the data collected, together with the concept of the business and her own understanding and favor about organizing a space, the author has applied all her knowledge to the space planning of the restaurant, in every aspect of the interior design. The design's concept is the cozyness and help increase the intimacy between people. It owns a basement of neutral and calm Scandinavian design, with some highlights from Asian culture. Small details about the decoration as well as the whole combination is expected to make customers feel more relaxing and comfortable.

It might not be easy to evaluate the potential of the plan, however, based on theory and practical observation, the author believes that the plan owns a considerable potential to progress. The business is expectedly to be operated in 2018. By that time, the author would have a better chance to put the theory into practice and therefore, the evaluation will be more precise and realistic.

8 Summary of thesis

This thesis is written by a Facility Management student and it is a part of a business plan for a Vietnamese HotPot restaurant which is expected to be opened in Helsinki, Finland in the future. Because of the unpopularity of HotPot in Finland, a particular plan with detailed information about distinctive factors regarding the idea is essential. That was also the reason why this thesis is necessary. It aims at creating a specific strategy for effective space planning by applying base knowledge in several different aspects.

The knowledge in the thesis is based on understanding about facility management major. Especially, theory about location selection and general theory about space planning as well as environmental psychology play an extremely crucial role since they explain to the author the most fundamental information. It is also a chance for the author to improve her insights and develop her own ideas in creating a suitable and practical plan.

Several research methods were conducted to gather information about the actual situation. Observations, benchmarking and online survey helped the author in collecting data and after that analyzing them. Observations and benchmarking with four most popular restaurants in metropolitan area in Finland has helped the author to understand about the current space planning of these places. From there, she was able to compare and evaluate the pros and cons of each place. This can be lessons guiding the actual plan later on. On the other hand, the quantitative research method, in this case, the online survey, has been remarkably beneficial since it provides information about the preferences and taste of a majority of people in Finland, who might be the potential customers for the business. These information will be crucial in making final choices and affect to the decision making process since they reflect the desire and interests of customers.

To sum up, the study has achieved some initial explorations and satisfy the research problems to some extent. Additionally, it is a golden opportunity for the author to strengthen her knowledge basement about Facility Management major. During research process, the author was able to create a detailed plan for the startup. Considering several factors, the author has concluded that the plan is potential to be put in practice. However, it is anticipated that many difficulties are awaiting and these are inevitable during setting up a real place. Therefore, it is necessary to consider many other obstacles which will appear during operating this restaurant. Nevertheless, the author believes that this thesis will act as a guide for initial establishment and a basement for further developments not only for her personal plan but also for other business in the future.

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