



The Future of Rāmen:

Sustainability challenges in a changing urban food landscape

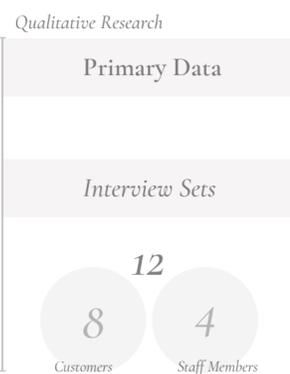
The sub-theme "Feeding the City" by Floriade Expo 2022 provides a platform for the Flevo Campus to develop innovative scientific developments regarding the urbanisation issues of the future. In spite of rising sustainability and climate change issues, this research aims to gain a **better understanding** of reasons to import regional Japanese ingredients above growing and harvesting these ingredients in the Netherlands, whilst also digging deeper into the added values of importing Japanese rāmen ingredients. The research took place in the **development phase** of the intervention.

This research provides Flevo Campus with an understanding of the **applicability** and **practicality** of **implementing sustainable alternatives** for **innovative food techniques** in the Netherlands when it comes to the **Japanese rāmen cuisine**, but also other Japanese dishes and (East-)Asian cuisines which gained popularity in Western food culture

Research Question

How do first and second-generation citizens and restaurant staff members of Japanese descent in the Amsterdam metropolitan area perceive the changing food landscape in order to sustain accessible food resources for the future of the rising popularity of Japanese cuisine in cosmopolitan settlements?

Methodology & Data Analysis



12 semi-structured, explorative **interviews** were conducted to gain understanding of what kind of added values are represented by the import of local and regional Japanese ingredients to create an authentically perceived ramen dish, as well as understanding the interviewees' perception on the changing food landscape

	S1	S2	S3	S4
3				
4	Introductory			
5	A1: Personalia	I am 25 and I am from J. So, my name is Midori. My name is Akihiro. My name is Yuki Yama.		
6	A2: Residence	I am currently living in B. I am from Japan in the J.		
7	A3: Japanese Heritage	I do not associate myself. No	Yes	
8	A4: Food Beliefs	No, I eat everything.	Actually no, I am a flexi-vegetarian.	
9				
10				
11	Business Identity			
12	B1: Concept/Mission	We are here at Flevo. Ramen Chanko, which is (probably) from the west.		
13	B2: Job-Description	I am a waiter and I serve. I was just working there.	and I work at Men Ingo.	
14	B3: Work History	I have been working since. So, I was actually working.	I started making ramen.	
15	B4: Customer Profile	So, the biggest change @ W&L, it should be pretty. I would say that around.		
16	B5: Feedback	No, because giving food.	Of course, this depends.	
17	B6: Team & Staff	Oh, Akihiro, the guy.	Then, we have about 70 p.	
18	B7: Management	There are a few. There is a few in Japan. I think that.		
19	B8: Collaborations	No, because we don't ha.	We wanted to give. Takey. Yes, so before I went to J.	
20	B9: Future		It was a high pressure for.	
21				

Audio recordings of the transcripts, quotes and longer excerpts were further **colour-coded**. In order to detect different relevant categories of information, further **categorisation** into themes and sub-themes were made, each with their respective label.

Data Findings

Interviewees mentioned the **know-how** of the rāmen chef, and a **similar restaurant experience as expected in Japan** to be the **most valuable added elements** and therefore **essential** to be applied in the Dutch food landscape.

Issues related to questions of authenticity and sustainability were perceived in a **similar manner** amongst both **first and second generation customers of Japanese descent**, generally resulting in **interchangeable perspectives**.

Restaurant-owners and staff **acknowledge** rising sustainability issues and are **willing to transition** into more sustainable policies, even at the risk of altering (what is considered as) the authentic rāmen dish.

Additional Insights

However, **difficulties** remain in **establishing a foundational pathway** amongst Japanese rāmen restaurants to discuss how a **collaborative approach could enhance sustainability awareness and actions**.

Even though, Japanese customers are referring to rāmen as a dish that relates strongly to their Japanese identity, **adaptation** of the ramen dish is **encouraged to cater to more inclusive and greener options**.

Preliminary Conclusion

Preliminary steps into tackling sustainability issues in the restaurant spaces that haven't been implemented across all Japanese rāmen restaurants can be **actively considered** (baseline for further integration).

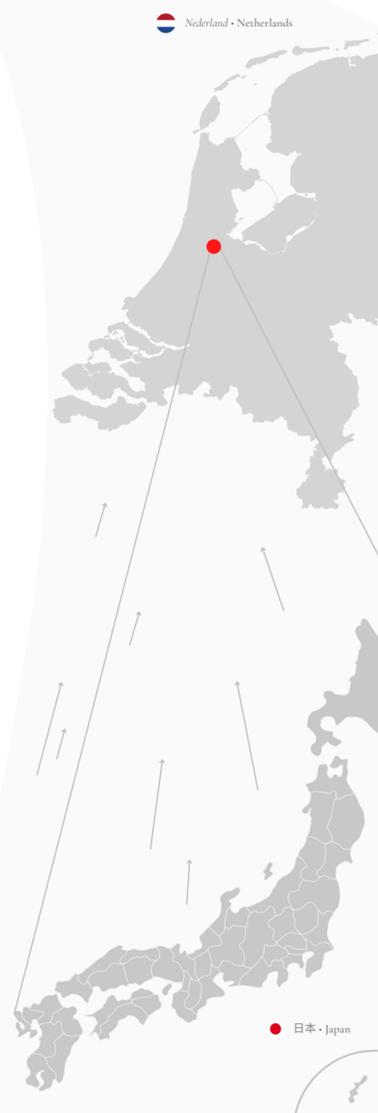
Stimulating **involvement in grassroots projects**, such as the "Toko van de Toekomst" is necessary for **continuous flow** of conversation and attention given to the subject.

A stronger sense (and active participation) in **community building** amongst Japanese rāmen restaurants in metropolitan areas **increases the support base** for prioritising sustainability issues whilst actively debating the authentic value of the rāmen dish.

Questions

1 What is the best possible way to compare and interpret answers of multiple interviewees to the same themes and sub-themes?

2 What is your approach to integrating similar projects (based on literature) into your research paper?



"For us it is more about how we can inspire people to choose for quality products that costs ten times more than something you can get at Albert Heijn in bulk for way cheaper. Especially with Dutch customers, we really have to explain that it does taste different, it is sourced different and it is ethically different. All we need is to tap into that humanity side"

- Kaho Onuki, second generation Japanese customer

"Rāmen culture is not static. Any culture is kind of fluid in a way. Therefore, I believe ramen should also have the freedom to be tweaked or moulded a bit. Of course, the traditional way of making the dish is nice and we should definitely preserve it, but we should also have additional branches."

- Mari Fujiwara, second generation Japanese customer