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LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Serving Excellence

~ Achieving Excellence through Restaurant Management: Case Study of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Countryside of Skåne ~

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Lund, Spring 2009

Annika Hinrichs | Ruta Idzeliene | Marta Slodnik

ABSTRACT

Title:	Serving Excellence. *Achieving Excellence through Restaurant Management: Case Study of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Countryside of Skåne*
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Authors:	Annika Hinrichs, Ruta Idzeliene, Marta Slodnik
Advisor:	Magnus Lagnevik
Thesis purpose:	The main purpose of this study is to increase the current level of theoretical understanding, concerning the role of management in securing excellent dining experience within the fine dining restaurant sector of Southern Sweden.
Methodology:	This thesis employs the qualitative approach and uses case studies as a research strategy. The primary data is collected through interviews, document studies (personal documents and photo elicitation), and in addition of observations.
Theoretical Framework:	The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM) serves as a basis for this study which is complimented by additional theory.
Conclusion:	The results of the study allow for concluding that the restaurant management is aware of the importance of their role in securing excellent dining experience as well as of the significance of staff integration into the overall restaurant concept. Furthermore, FAMM and additional theories are found to be relevant and practiced either consciously or subconsciously.
Research Limitations:	The study mainly focuses on the managerial perspective (internal aspects), and does not directly explore customers views, changes in the society, etc. (external aspects).
Keywords:	Excellence, Restaurants, Restaurant Industry, Management, Case study, Fine dining, Countryside, Sweden, Skåne, Five Aspects Meal Model, FAMM.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will first briefly present some background information of the chosen research area - "Achieving Excellence through Restaurant Management". Second, the research problem and specific research questions will be presented. Before the introduction part ends with the disposition, the theoretical and practical relevance of this thesis will be explained.

1.1 Background: Dining out in Sweden

Dining out is not an invention of modern times. Persson in his paper (2001), overviews the restaurant history and says that the first written documents about a restaurant industry date back approximately 5000 years. These documents are related to the nation of Sumerians in the region of Mesopotamia, presently Iraq. Ancient findings (cuneiform writing) of the nation of the Sumerians inform about two different types of gastronomy that were existent in those days. The first type is a kind of a 'pub' for local customers. The second type is a 'restaurant' combined with accommodation (caravanserai) for people, who are travelling for private or business purposes (ibid.).

In the 17th century a similar development was found in Sweden. According to Söderlund (2002), pubs (krögar) and hostelries (gästgivare) must have been existent since 1614 or even earlier. In that year first regulations for the prosecution of gastronomy were enacted by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus. The goal of these regulations was to decrease malpractice, such as selling alcohol illegally or providing accommodation free of charge. Other legal instruments of that time confirm that various types of gastronomy were developing, which provided different services. In 1622, the two above mentioned pubs and hostelries received the privilege of being the only locations which were allowed to sell wine and beer to foreigners. While the hostelries were permitted to sell any kind of alcohol available on the market, pubs were only allowed to sell three kinds of wines or beers, coming from Spain, France or the region of Rhine, Germany. In 1686 further distinctions between 'neighborhood pubs' (källare) and 'coffee houses' (kaffehus) were introduced. Regulations continued to develop and became more rigorous regarding opening hours, range of products, services, and customers (ibid.).

Whether this can already be considered a restaurant industry, as it is understood today, is certainly debatable. Scholarly literature does not agree on when the term 'restaurant industry' was introduced, either. According to Meiselman (2008), restaurants did not exist until the late

18th century. The geographical roots for the restaurant development are assumed to be in France. History demonstrates that eating habits and patterns generally shift over time (ibid.). Persson (2001) characterizes the restaurant industry as a business which is turbulent and dynamic. This does not apply to eating patterns only, but also to food consumption. Until the middle of the 19th century, for example, meals were first served in the French style. This means that all the food was carried to the table at the same time and no eating order existed. Later on, the Russian style replaced the French one and waiters served different courses in a certain order (Meiselman, 2008). This style is only 200 years old and remains to be the classical one in fine dining restaurants in Sweden and the rest of the Western world, even though the restaurant industry continually introduces new eating styles and fashions. Meiselmann (2008), for example, points out the development of single plated meals, pre-made food, and fast food, taking place in the 20th century. This is followed by food trends, e.g. French fries, pizza, Indian curry, bagels, Chinese noodles, sushi, and others in the 21st century as a result of globalization. That is especially the case in larger cities were a substantial variation of food can be consumed at any given time. The three largest cities in Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö) offer approximately 4.974 dining out places, covering the tastes of over 40 nations, which can easily be found on the internet without any advanced searching tools (www.eniro.se, www.alltomstockholm.se, www.goteborg.se, www.malmo.se).

Meanwhile, *"[f]ew would dispute that consumers have become increasingly more sensitive to product and service quality in recent years (Hart and Casserly, 1985)"* (cited by Lee and Hing, 1995). Globalization might be considered one of the reasons which affects customers' life styles, working conditions, travelling experiences, and brings in a wide range of dining fashions and tastes. This consequently results in enhanced customers' needs and expectations for dining out. Consequently, restaurateurs are forced to differentiate their services and concepts from the ones of competitors. Another reason for more demanding customer behavior arises from *"[c]onsumerism, media attention, increased advertising and promotion and technological progress"* (ibid.). All of these forces have *"contributed to the consumers' belief that they have a right to receive products and services which meet their expectations"* (ibid.).

According to the Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHR), the number of restaurants constantly grew over the last years. In 2007, 17.660 restaurants belonged to the association and all together generated a turnover of 54.362 million Swedish crowns (www.shr.se). Of these restaurants 2.331 are located in the region of Skåne, generating a total turnover of 6.097 million Swedish crowns (ibid.). According to "Statistics Sweden" the disposable income of any Swedish

household increased significantly during the last years. Interestingly, *"[t]he expenditure group that increased the most between the periods 2003-2005 and 2005-2007 is for meals out, which has increased by an average of 11.4 percent"* (www.*scb.se, HBS 2005-2007).*

All factors combined represent a great opportunity and challenge for the restaurant management in the region of Skåne as well as the rest of Sweden. Therefore, the key task for the managers is to stand out of the crowd by creating the right dining experience and securing business success. The need for differentiation of restaurants within the gastronomy industry is also expressed by Walker and Lundberg (2001). It is especially relevant today, since the industry is characterized by rapid expansion and strong competition. For instance, a study on restaurant failure rates showed that 27 percent of new opened restaurants fail already during the first year; approximately 50 percent of all new restaurants have to close down by the end of the third business year and even 60 percent by the end of the fifth year. According to "Dun and Bradstreet Corporation's Business Failure Record" gastronomy represented the industry with the highest business failure rate within the retail and service sector between 1992 and 1997 (ibid.).

Generally, differentiation is harder to achieve because ecological products, exotic fruits, vegetables, ethnic ingredients, etc. are available to any restaurant, if desired. Therefore, restaurant management has to consider a holistic approach (Morgan et al., 2008). This view is also expressed by Edwards and Gustafsson (2008), who consider a number of additional factors present in the dining *experience.*

The above discussion shows that the restaurant management is increasingly facing difficulties when creating and delivering excellence in dining. The Western society is characterized by a high level of individualism. Therefore, management has to define a restaurant concept which would generate an excellent dining experience and result in satisfied customers and their different preferences. The Swedish government has also recognized the importance of the above and in 1992 announced that the University of Örebro:

> *[s]hould provide an academic education for chefs and waiters emphasizing 'the aesthetic configuration of the meal' in commercial settings. This academic education should aim to increase the knowledge and status of professionals working in restaurant industry, thereby enhancing restaurant business performance and laying a foundation for research.*

Gustafsson, 2008

These guidelines reflect the vision of the government of transforming the country of Sweden into the country of culinary experiences (White Guide, 2009). This also applies to the region of Skåne, which has always been *"[o]ne of the hottest culinary regions"* (Culinary Skåne, 2009).

1.2 Problem formulation

The question remains how an excellent dining experience can be created, which satisfies customer expectations. Since managers are central in this process, they have to identify the key parameters for achieving a unique dining experience, which would correspond with customer expectations. The above understanding is well expressed by Edwards et al. (2008):

> *As the foodservice industry develops and moves more and more away from the simple provision and service of food towards the staging of memorable experiences (see for example, Pine and Gilmore 1998), it is becoming increasingly important to understand the multiplicity of factors involved when eating out.*
>
> ibid.

Although one can get an impression that existing research on gastronomy discusses customers' preferences regards to dining experience (Iglesias and Guillen, 2004; Andersson and Mossberg, 2005; Jensen and Hansen, 2007; Harris and Ezeh, 2008; Walter, 2008), it is not clear how the restaurant management responds to these preferences (Gustafsson, 2004; Gustafsson et al., 2006; Walker, 2007; Jang and Namkung, 2009). Currently, the Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM), which was developed by the previously mentioned Örebro University, is very prominent in the Swedish gastronomic education. The theoretical model presents and describes the five aspects of a meal: room, meeting, product, atmosphere and management control system. These aspects relate to management and customers within the restaurant setting (Gustafsson et al., 2006). Since 1990, when the model was introduced, it has been modified in 2004 and 2006. Nevertheless, the current version of FAMM leaves a number of questions open. In particular, it is not clear how the management control system can influence the rest of the aspects in order to achieve excellence in dining. However, this understanding is detrimental for the commercial success of restaurants.

In order to reach this goal, the management has to formulate and implement a restaurant strategy. Furthermore, managers have to integrate the rest of the restaurant personnel into the implementation of the strategy. It is therefore interesting to find out whether the strategies are understood in the same manner by different parties within the restaurant, meaning the frontline

personnel and the kitchen staff as also suggested by Harris and Ezeh (2008). Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of how these strategies differ depending on a restaurant category (ibid.), e.g., fine dining, casual dining, etc. (Walker, 2007)

1.3 Purpose of the study

With that in mind, this study aims at increasing the current level of theoretical understanding about management's role in securing excellent dining experience in fine dining restaurants in the countryside of Southern Sweden. More specifically, the purpose of this research project consists of three objectives, which are listed below:

1) to ***identify*** which aspects does management consider as important, when creating excellence in fine dining restaurants in the rural region of Southern Sweden, Skåne;

2) to ***detect*** if front line personnel and kitchen staff follow the management's strategy in creating excellence or if there are potential gaps in, e.g., understanding or implementing the concept;

3) to ***find out*** if there are any relationships between the aspects, which management considers to be the most important in achieving excellence in fine dining; if so, to ***describe*** these relationships in a more specific way than currently done by FAMM.

While it is not expected that this study will deliver in-depth answers to this knowledge gap, it is hoped that the study will reveal some interesting findings and suggest directions for further research.

1.4 Theoretical and practical relevance

As previously noted, there are a lot of studies done, which explore customers expectations in regards to excellent dining experiences. On the contrary, there is a lack of substantial information on the aspects considered by managements in creating excellence in dining establishments. Currently, the FAMM model, developed in Sweden, seems to provide a broad theoretical base and consider a variety of aspects, which determine excellence within gastronomy in general. It is even less known about management's role in securing excellence

within a specific restaurant category, in this case fine dining. This is also recognized by Harris and Ezeh (2008), who encourage to *"focus on specific classes of restaurants in order for elements significant to particular restaurants to be identified".* Therefore this study expects to present some new insights and give a better understanding of theories when applied to fine dining restaurants, located in the countryside of Skåne. Furthermore, it is hoped that the research will reveal to what extent is theory relevant to restaurant management, even though they might not be aware of it. The authors also believe that the results will allow for further development of the FAMM model and other theories. Finally, this study may also provide some practical advice to restaurant managers on how to attain excellence in fine dining establishments.

1.5 Disposition

The second chapter (Theoretical Framework) will introduce key concepts and present relevant literature on how excellence in dining can be achieved. The following chapter (Research Methodology) will discuss and explain the literature search strategy and the chosen methods which will help to inquire into the purpose of this study. The fourth chapter (Analysis and Discussion based on Theory and Empirical Findings) will discuss the most relevant and interesting empirical findings. Thereafter, a conclusion part (Conclusion and Contributions) will summarize the study results, present theoretical and practical contributions. Finally, the paper will end with a review of limitations of this study and provide suggestions for further research (Limitations and Further Research).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will first define the key concepts to be used throughout the paper: fine dining, excellence, and restaurant management. Then the literature review will follow, which will discuss how management can achieve excellence in restaurant operations in general and/or in fine dining, if specified. The literature review will be based on FAMM. Throughout this chapter, some knowledge gaps will be identified. Finally, a summary of all theoretical approaches will be presented, which will serve as a basis for the subsequent empirical study.

2.1 Key concepts

The theoretical framework corresponds with the research purpose and lays a foundation that enables the study. Therefore, relevant concepts need to be introduced and discussed. In this case relevant concepts are fine dining, excellence, management and its involvement in the creation of excellent fine dining experiences. One of the main questions in the theoretical framework is how far the existing theories allow for establishment of relationships between these three terms and concepts.

2.1.1 Fine dining

Fine dining is not a new phenomenon, but a rather long existing restaurant concept, which flourishes where the income is high and the habit of slow eating has a long history (Wood and Brotherton, 2008). According to the “Broad classification of restaurants” (Walker, 2007), fine dining is one out of five main restaurant categories, located on the other end of the continuum from quick service restaurants, family dining, casual dining, and dinner houses in between:

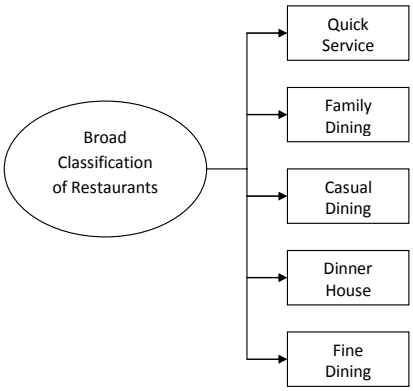

Figure 2-1: Broad classification of restaurants, *adapted from Walker (2007)*

Generally, fine dining is said to embody *"the segment of the industry that is responsible for the glamour element of the foodservice industry"* (Wood and Brotherton, 2008). Furthermore, every now and then this category of restaurants is labeled as 'white tablecloth' (ibid.). While white tablecloths are a definite attribute of fine dining restaurants, it is by far not the only one. High-priced food and drinks, consumed at a slow pace and surrounded by exceptional customer service are among further fine dining attributes (Walker, 2007). In fact, high customer service quality is attained through highly competent employees working not only in the front, but also in the back stage of the restaurant (Wood and Brotherton, 2008). What concerns ownership, fine dining establishments are almost always privately owned and run, which is quite different from other restaurant categories, e.g., quick service, family dining, casual dining (ibid.).

Restaurant guests personify one more distinctive feature of fine dining; many customers visit high-class restaurants due to a celebration or a special event (Walker, 2007). Fine dining restaurants also frequently serve as a form of business guests' entertainment (ibid.). Since fine dining is expensive, it is assumed that the restaurant guests are well-off. Even though customers are central in the fine dining concept, they have to be the 'right ones'. Otherwise, *"[v]ery expensive restaurants [might] turn off many well-to-do guests and make others uncomfortable when they feel they don't fit in or dislike the implied snobbery of the guests or staff"* (ibid.). However, there is a new trend coming, which makes fine dining restaurants more casual:

> *As younger customers advance in income and age to the point where they might be customers for fine dining, they might be put off by overly formal dining. In many stances, they prefer an upscale experience that is more casual.*
>
> Powers and Barrows, 2003

All of the above are typical characteristics of fine dining, whether they are found in a more formal or casual fine dining setting. The previously mentioned element of 'glamour', however, is a constant feature in both cases and marks the entire fine dining service by exclusivity. In conclusion, the fine dining restaurant concept, explored in this thesis, is well summarized by the following excerpt, which will be used throughout the study:

> *Tables, china, glassware, silverware, and napery are usually expensive, and the appointments can be costly, often including paintings and interesting architectural features. […] The menus usually include expensive, imported items such as foie gras, caviar, and truffles. Only the most tender vegetable are served. Colorful garnishment is part of the presentation. Delectable and interesting flavors are*

incorporated into the food, and the entire dining event is calculated to titillate the guests' visual, auditory, and psychological experience. Expensive wines are always on hand, offered on an extensive wine list.

Walker, 2007

2.1.2 Excellence

Excellence is a generic term universally used in a variety of contexts, restaurant industry being one of them. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, excellence stands for *"the quality of being extremely good or outstanding"* (1995). This very word and its' meaning fit well into the concept of fine dining, the hallmark of which is an exceptional quality vs. mediocre. Therefore, in this study the word 'excellence' serves as an extra emphasis on the word 'fine' (fine dining), which in itself already stands for *"high quality", "very good", "beautiful or pleasing"* (ibid.). The quality must be present in all aspects of fine dining. If the quality is lost, the identity of fine dining is lost as well, since the two are inseparable.

Woodside and Martin (2008) also reinforce the notion that excellence is a prerequisite for fine dining. The study, which examines consumers' views on restaurants, is based on the words that customers select to describe their dining experience in two types of restaurants: casual dining and fine dining. The empirical findings reveal that excellence is among the top 20 words associated with fine dining. On the contrary, excellence is not mentioned at all when talking about casual dining (ibid.):

Casual	N	%	Fine dining	N	%
food	213	9.3	food	190	9.4
good	178	7.8	expensive	156	7.7
atmosphere	88	3.8	good	124	6.1
service	79	3.4	service	75	3.7
Italian	65	2.8	great	69	3.4
family	61	2.7	atmosphere	62	3.1
fun	57	2.5	French	46	2.3
casual	49	2.1	restaurant	46	2.3
great	46	2.0	nice	42	2.1
restaurant	45	2.0	dining	35	1.7
price	44	1.9	fine	34	1.7
friendly	42	1.8	high	29	1.4
music	41	1.8	steak	29	1.4
American	34	1.5	Asian	27	1.3
chain	34	1.5	location	27	1.3
inexpensive	33	1.4	city	26	1.3
loud	33	1.4	upscale	25	1.2
nice	32	1.4	quality	21	1.0
ok	32	1.4	excellence	20	1.0
drink	31	1.4	centre	19	0.9

Figure 2-2: Top 20 unique words used to describe casual and fine-dining restaurants, *adapted from (Woodside, and Martin 2008)*

An interrelated study is conducted by Jensen and Hansen (2007), who explore customers' values in regards to à la Carte, which fall under the upscale restaurant category. The results confirm that consumers value excellence and prove that this term is pertinent to fine dining setting. Initially, Holbrook (1994; 1999) coined excellence as one of the customer values and defined it *"as an extrinsic, reactive, self-oriented consumer value"* (cited in Jensen and Hansen, 2007). However, Jensen and Hansen (2007) propose a different definition of this value:

> *Excellence is the staff's ability to execute its tasks and its delivery of service in interaction with the restaurant facilities and customers, thus conveying an impression of luxury that is beyond the ordinary level in an efficient way, as well as giving the customer an impression of something new and creative.*
>
> ibid.

There are three arguments for a modified definition. First, the value of excellence refers to a specific service context, e.g., à la Carte restaurants. Second, the term represents the customers' point of view. Third, excellence is divided into three sub-values: outstandingness, efficiency, and discovery. 'Outstandingness' means *"beyond the ordinary level"*, while 'efficiency' represents *"efficient way"* of performing tasks. Finally, 'discovery' implies *"an* impression of something new and creative" (ibid.).

The latter definition of excellence is relevant to the context of this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, the definition speaks on customers' behalf and clearly states that excellence is one of the values they appreciate in upscale restaurants. This statement explains why excellence is examined in this study. Secondly, the definition is especially appropriate, since it refers to upscale restaurants which are also explored in this paper. Thirdly, as the study by Jensen and Hansen (2007) is conducted in Scandinavia (Norway), the obtained results seem to be applicable to the Swedish market investigated in this research. Lastly, the definition states that 'serving' excellence is a managerial responsibility and that is in line with the standpoint of this thesis.

2.1.3 Restaurant Management

"Passion for Excellence" by Peter and Austin (1985) is one of the most outstanding books on effective management (Woodside and Martin, 2008). The authors of the book note:

> *There is no magic: only people who find and nurture champions, dramatize company goals and direction, build skills and teams, spread irresistible enthusiasm. They are cheerleaders, coaches, storytellers, and wanderers. They encourage, excite, teach, listen, facilitate. Their actions are consistent. Only brute consistency breeds believability: they say people are special and they treat them that way – always.*
>
> Peter and Austin, 1985, cited by Woodside and Martin, 2008

Even though the above quote implies that a unique personality and outstanding skills are required for managing in an excellent manner, *"[t]he challenges associated with the management of a restaurant begin and end with the basic functions and responsibilities of management"* (Wood and Brotherton, 2008). Some of those functions include:

- *human resources (including recruiting, hiring, retaining, training and developing employees);*
- *quality control (including safety and sanitation);*
- *design and implementation of standards and procedures;*
- *customer service;*
- *financial accounting and control;*
- *internal marketing;*
- *menu management and new product development;*
- *information and communications management;*
- *maintenance of the physical facility;*
- *providing a safe and secure environment for the health and safety of employees;*
- *purchasing of food and beverage product (and receiving, proper storage practices and issuing);*
- *management of alcoholic beverages;*
- *providing ongoing leadership; and*
- *protection of physical assets.*

ibid.

According to Wood and Brotherton (2008), it seems that managers are responsible for all restaurant operations from food and beverages to employee training, accounting, marketing, and even protection of restaurant property. However, the role of restaurant managers is not central or present in all theoretical approaches. Walker (2007), for example, positions the restaurant concept and market in the center. Thus, the management is given the same importance as atmosphere, price, menu, etc.:

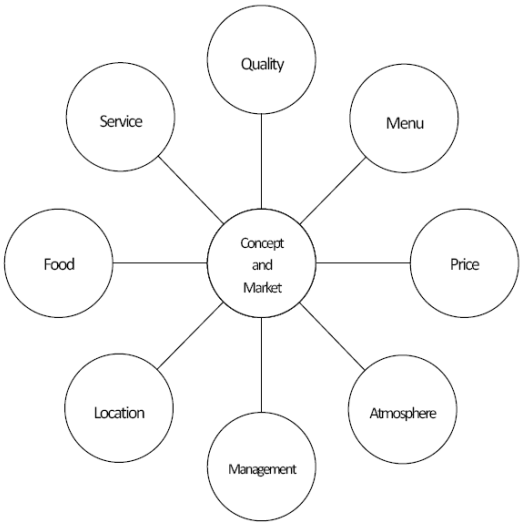

Figure 2-3: The concept and market comprise the hub around, which the restaurant develops, *adapted from Walker (2007)*

Jang and Namkung (2009) also state that *"both tangible and intangible features of the restaurant such as product attributes, physical environments, and service aspects"* have to be considered. However, they do not emphasize the management aspect. Neither does Campbell-Smith (1967), as his approach to the overall meal experience relies on food, atmosphere, and service (cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009).

"The Five Aspects Meal Model" (FAMM), presented by the Department of Restaurant and Culinary Arts at Örebro University and further developed by Gustafsson et al. (2004; 2006), brings in one more approach to restaurant operations. Just like other studies, this model also discusses service, product, facilities, and atmosphere. In contrast, FAMM introduces an obvious responsibility given to the management for achieving excellence. This corresponds with Jensen and Hansen (2007) where management is also said to be accountable for achieving excellence. The importance of management's role is not immediately visible in the first version of the model, suggested in 1990 (see Figure 2-4); either it was not intended or it was intended but not visualized. However, this changes with further development of FAMM (Gustafsson 2004; Gustafsson et al., 2006). Therefore it is important to present and discuss all three versions of the model (see Figure 2-5; Figure 2-6).

The first version of FAMM, presented in 1990 seems to be fairly comprehensive. Even though restaurant operations are classified in five categories only (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, management control system), each of them is described in detail:

Room	Meeting	Product	Atmosphere	Management control system
Style history	Social psychology	Theory and practical training about food and beverages, wine, beer, coffee, tea	History of ideas and cultural history	Business economy
Architectural style	Emotional theory	Meal forms training: canteen, à la carte, ceremonial meals	Communication: writing, speaking	Computer work
Textiles	Social intercourse in different cultural groups	Food and cooking, creative cooking and creation of meal events		Handling statistics
Art science		Microbiology, nutrition cooking chemistry		Work environment
Design	Practical training: interpretation of guests and satisfying their wishes	Menu planning	Choreography, body language	Marketing
	Professional meetings; backstage and front stage	Sensory analysis	Color, sounds and light	Organization of the work
	Meetings: guests–guests	The hotel and restaurant trade and their history	Floral decoration	Labour law Laws about working with alcohol

Figure 2-4: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM) from the Department of Restaurant and Culinary Arts (1990), *adapted from Gustafsson (2004)*

In general, FAMM states that restaurant guests first encounter room, then meeting, and lastly product, but this flow is not depicted in the model. Moreover, it is questionable whether the first version of FAMM (1990) can already be considered as a model, since it only provides a detailed description of all five aspects, but does not portray how they are interrelated. The later versions of the model (2004; 2006), however, address this shortcoming by showing interconnectedness of different aspects. For the purpose of clarity, the second and the third versions of the models are provided below:

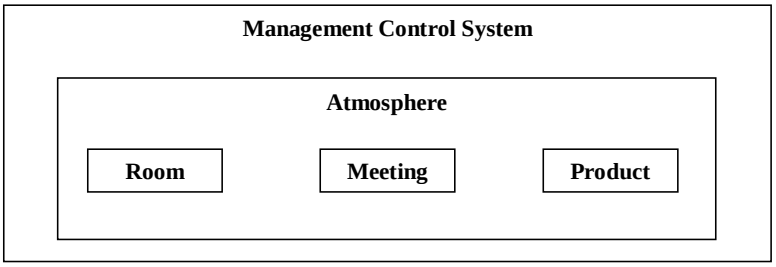

Figure 2-5: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM), *adapted from Gustafsson (2004)*

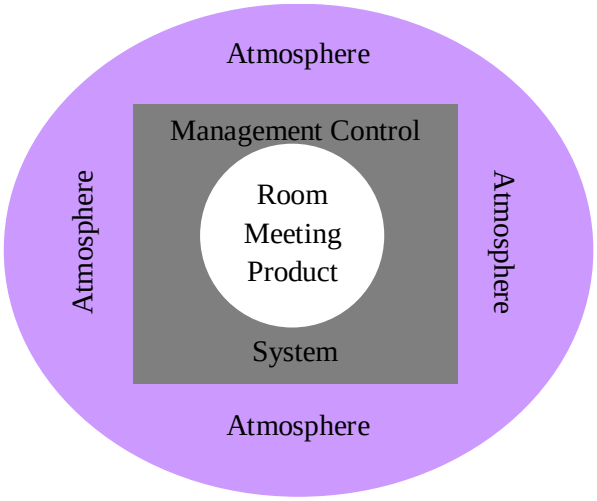

Figure 2-6: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM), *adapted from Gustafsson et al. (2006)*

As shown above, both versions of FAMM contain the same five aspects. Nevertheless, their allocation is different, except for room, meeting, and product, which remain at the core of both versions of the model. However, in FAMM of 2006, room, meeting, and place are allocated below management control system, and not below atmosphere, as in FAMM of 2004. This pushes the management control system below atmosphere. As a result, atmosphere is no longer a definite outcome of management control systems' ability to coordinate room, meeting, and product. Subsequently, atmosphere becomes dependent on external forces, too and not only on internal forces, i.e., the management control system. This allows external forces to affect atmosphere and management control system to some extent. In contrast, previously all five aspects of the FAMM seemed to be 'pure products' of internal forces and the influence of external forces was not considered. This would allow for the conclusion that in FAMM of 2004 management was able to fully control all other four aspects, as they had no other influences. However, in FAMM of 2006 it was realized that this is not appropriate since there are external factors beyond management control which can have a significant influence on the aspects of FAMM, although external forces are not indicated in the model.

The above discussion corresponds with the claim made by Gustafsson (2004), who agrees that atmosphere is a result of both internal and external factors and says that *"[t]he atmosphere is very much created by the guests/dinners themselves, however, to what extent this process may be supported by creative ideas from the staff is not clear".* When the above considerations are taken into account, the current FAMM model (2006) is suggested to include the following modifications:

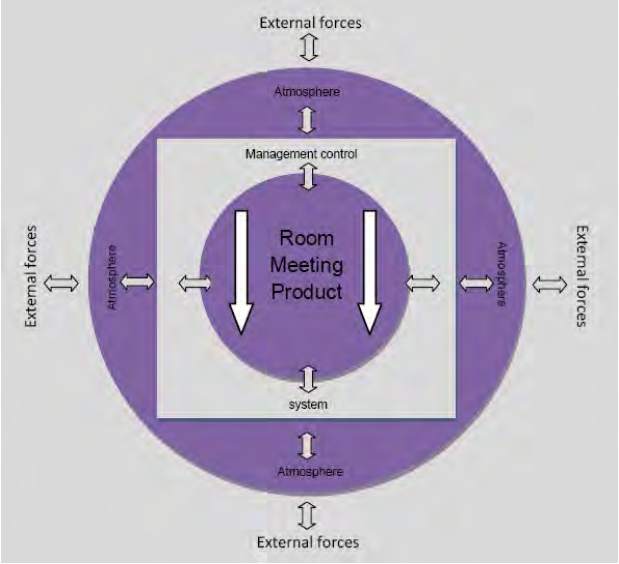

Figure 2-7: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM), adapted from Gustafsson et al. (2006) and amended by the authors of this thesis (2009)

It is evident that even though, FAMM was adjusted over the course of time (1990; 2004; 2006), it leaves a number of questions about the management's role in securing excellent dining experience and about the relations among all the five aspects. It is also worth noting that the model is based on the Michelin guide (Jensen and Hansen, 2007), which rates only restaurants, in large cities. Consequently, this might pose some challenges when carrying out the study on restaurants, located in the countryside. Furthermore, FAMM is not adapted to any particular restaurant category, i.e., fine dining, casual dining, etc. This can also be a challenge when studying fine dining establishments.

Although FAMM has a few shortcomings, it serves as a solid base for this study. First of all the model is fairly comprehensive and thus provides good theoretical grounds. Furthermore, FAMM seems to be the model, which grants management the most responsibility for creating excellent dining experience. Lastly, FAMM was developed in Sweden, which allows concluding that the model should be relevant to the Swedish market as well.

2.2 Literature review based on the FAMM

The below section explains and discusses FAMM in greater detail since it is used as a basis for this study. In addition, FAMM is complemented by other valuable theoretical insights. The

theoretical discussion is done keeping in mind the relevance of theories and their link to the concept of excellence.

2.2.1. Room

The first aspect in FAMM is room (Gustafsson, 2004), which could also be understood as location, interior or space in which the meal is consumed. The room is defined in the following way:

> *The room constitutes the setting of the meal. This encompasses the shape of the room, how the room is connected to other rooms and how the people, both diners and staff, use the room. […] A laid-out table may even qualify as 'the small room' in itself. Here the artist may come in, creating a sense of entirety.*
>
> ibid.

The room in FAMM of 1990 consists of many parts, e.g. style history, architectural style, textiles, art science, and design (ibid.). Obviously, managers in fine dining restaurants have to achieve excellence in all of these elements. Other researchers also acknowledge the importance of the room aspect. However, the theoretical discussion on the room will be continued under the atmosphere aspect, since the two are closely connected.

Excellence through design

The design of restaurant facilities is important not only because of its aesthetic appeal, but also due to the fact that it might influence the duration of customer stay in the restaurant (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996 cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Furthermore, the design has an impact on customer satisfaction (Andrus, 1986 cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Besides, the exterior design creates some expectations for the interior and has to match with the décor, glassware, and the food itself (Meiselman, 2008). The study by Bell et al. (1994, cited by Meiselman, 2008) suggests that restaurants, e.g., when designed in Italian style, but in addition offering meals which would not necessarily be considered Italian, do sell more Italian dishes. This confirms the above statement that expectations arise from interior and exterior design and raises a question why FAMM does not consider a relationship between the room and the concept of a restaurant. If the arguments of Meiselman (2008) and Bell et al. (1994, cited by Meiselman, 2008) are considered, such a relationship can be significant.

2.2.2. Meeting

Meeting is the second aspect of FAMM (Gustafsson, 2004), which stands for a service encounter: interaction between the guests and staff as well as guests themselves. Meeting is described as follows:

> *The meeting refers to the interpersonal relations especially between the guests/diners themselves or the meeting between the staff and the guest/diner and their interactions – how the staffs manage to discern the requirements of the guest, who is always an individual with his or her special identity. […]There are also meetings between different professionals working in the kitchen and the dining room, which have to be positive for the guests to perceive a friendly atmosphere.*
>
> ibid.

The meeting aspect in FAMM of 1990 is rather broad and encompasses a number of components: social psychology, emotional theory, social intercourse in different cultural groups, practical training (interpretation of guests and satisfying their wishes), professional meetings (backstage and front stage), and meetings (guests-guests) (ibid.). This aspect becomes even broader when additional theories are considered. All these theories together challenge restaurant management and staff members in delivering excellent customer service. However, *"[t]he importance of the meeting in entirely different meal settings […] is probably vastly underestimated and also unexplored"* (Gustafsson, 2004). This leaves plenty of room for research in all restaurant categories, including fine dining.

Excellence through high customer quality

Lee and Hing (1995) state, that *"the long-term financial viability of service establishments is closely linked to their ability to deliver high quality service to current and potential customers (Garvin, 1987; Keiser, 1988)"*. In addition, Lee and Hing (1995) point out high quality customer service as a way for survival in the competitive restaurant industry, as it is suggested by Worsfold and Jameson (1991):

> *the fundamental variables contributing to customer satisfaction in a restaurant - meal quality, the environment and service - the former two can easily be improved, but it is the service element which will eventually provide a business with a sustainable competitive advantage.*

In addition, *"excellent customer service is critical in the development of customer trust and satisfaction"* (Meng and Elliott, 2008). Therefore, restaurant managers have to understand what

is the most important for guests when interacting with front line personnel. Once this information is available, management has to guide employees and enable them to respond to the needs of the guests (Noone, 2008).

Excellence through hospitality

The meeting aspect is *"essential for the guests' well-being, satisfaction and loyalty (Grönroos, 1987; Normann, 1991)"* in service sector in general and in the restaurant industry in particular (Walter, 2008). In spite of that, there is still a lack of knowledge about what happens at 'the front line'. While restaurants often highlight their chefs, owners or food (ibid.), hospitality, which is the essence of restaurant industry, is left unnoticed (ibid.). In other words, *"the way the host interacts with the guests and how the guests may experience a totally unexpected situation in a restaurant context"* is crucial (ibid.). Apparently, hospitality is important to all restaurant categories, but especially for fine dining restaurants where customers pay considerable amounts of money for food and drinks and expect a generous and personal service in return. Since the word 'host' is not specified, it is assumed that the term equally refers to front line personnel and the restaurant owners/managers.

Excellence through employee training

The meeting aspect in FAMM (Gustafsson, 2004) emphasizes proper psychological, emotional, and practical training of the staff. The study by Lundberg and Mossberg (2008), however, extends FAMM by pointing out three critical skills front line personnel needs to have in order to deliver high customer service. These skills include 'hard', 'soft', and 'aesthetic' skills, explained below:

> *hard skills relating to the technical performance of hospitality work (mainly learnt by formal education) such as wine knowledge and service skills […] 'soft' skills which are composed of attitudinal aspects of work and emotional labour (informal information sharing among employees) […], 'aesthetic' skills/appearance (learnt through interaction with guests) which are made up by the ability to 'look good' and/or 'sound right'.*
>
> ibid.

Many studies claim that the required skills can be attained through employee training (ibid.). However, *"learning from the workplace from and through other is also a very important aspect",* which should not be neglected (ibid.). Actually, this type of training is said to be very successful among highly motivated personnel members. Interestingly enough, managers call the latter

approach to training as the ‘useful gossip’ (Ekman, 2003), while marketers refer to it as ‘internal word-of-mouth’ (IWOM) (cited by Lundberg and Mossberg, 2008). It can be assumed that ‘useful gossip’ is especially relevant for fine dining restaurants, e.g., in the form of knowing individual preferences for food, drinks or services of loyal customers. If these preferences are shared among the staff members and recalled upon customers’ arrival, guests are satisfied.

Excellence through interpersonal skills of service providers

Interpersonal skills of service providers are equally important to those skills, which are acquired through training (Nikolich and Sparks, 1995, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). A few of those skills are reliability and empathy (Brady and Robertson, 2001, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). The study by Kim et al. (2006) confirms the above statement since *“friendliness of dining staff”* is found to be extremely significant and appreciated by upscale restaurant customers (cited by Meng and Elliott, 2008).

Excellence through guest reading

According to Gustafsson (2004), it is the staff’s duty to *“discern the requirements of the guest/dinner […], who is always an individual with his or her special identity”*. The same view is shared by Andersson and Mossberg (2004) who suggest that personal needs and philosophies of restaurant guests are very important and are even capable of dictating their expectations (cited by Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Generally, personal needs are divided into three categories: physiological, social, and intellectual (Scitovsky, 1986 cited by Andersson and Mossberg, 2004). Psychological needs are found to be the most important during the lunch time, while social needs during the dinner time (ibid.). Moreover, customers are willing to pay an extra price for satisfying their social and intellectual needs during their dinner, e.g., restaurant interior, customer service, other guests as well as good company (ibid.). Nevertheless, this topic is rarely addressed in research studies since most of them are mainly focused on food (Andersson and Mossberg, 2004).

2.2.3. Product

The third aspect in FAMM is product (Gustafsson, 2004), which is equally important to the previously discussed aspects of room and meeting. The model of 1990 lists several attributes related to the product: theory and practical training about food and beverages (wine, beer, coffee, tea), meal forms training (canteen, à la carte, ceremonial meals), food and cooking (creative cooking and creation of meal events), microbiology (nutrition cooking chemistry), menu

planning, sensory analysis, the hotel and restaurant trade and their history (ibid.). The product is defined as follows:

> *The product consists of the food and drink served and the combination of food and drink. By dint of their craftsmanship, the chefs transform the foodstuffs into appetizing dishes. Their theoretical knowledge of the art of cooking as well as foodstuff chemistry then helps to make their effort more target-oriented […] The waiters use their theoretical and practical knowledge of food and drink to supply advice and suggestions as to a suitable wine for a dish. [...] If one link of the production and serving chain is broken, the diner's level of enjoyment can be lowered. In other words, the whole product process requires craftsmanship, practical/aesthetic knowledge and science in order to produce good meals and result in the optimum experience on the part of the guest/diner […].*
>
> ibid.

The definition implies that a successful delivery of a high quality product is dependant not only on competent chefs, but also on highly skilled front line personnel. This may allow for the suggestion that a qualified managerial oversight and support also have to be present in order to serve high quality food.

Excellence through LORE

In general, theoretical knowledge is required in order to prepare high quality food. In addition, chefs have to be experts of their local food. The study, called "Local food Cultures in the Swedish Rural Economy" revealed that LORE (LOcal and REgional food cultures) brings success to restaurants (Tellström et al., 2005). This is experienced through new customers, who enjoy unique high-quality local food culture. Moreover, authentic food is a reflection of a regional identity, as claimed by ethnologists (Köstlin, 1973; Salomonsson, 1984, cited by Tellström et al., 2005). The above is especially applicable to the Southern region of Sweden, Skåne, which has a long regional culinary tradition (Culinary Skåne, 2009), which should be cherished.

Excellence through foreign cuisine

If restaurants offer foreign cuisines, chefs have to understand basic foods, culinary techniques, and flavor principles, typical for each cuisine as well (Rozin, 1973, cited by Meiselman, 2008). The taste of the food depends on whether butter or olive oil, rice or potatoes, lamb or pork are used. These differences are further emphasized by varying cooking techniques, e.g. baking, roasting, steaming, etc. The food preparation is completed by using special flavor principles, which is the final touch. If the above guidelines are followed, the food will convey the authentic culture (ibid.).

Excellence through food characteristics

One of the most important aspects related to product is food characteristics, since they *"serve as tangible cues of service quality in restaurants"* (Jang and Namkung, 2009). The key features of the food are presentation (Raajpoot, 2002), health (Johns and Tyas, 1996), and freshness (Acebrón and Dopico, 2000; Johns and Tyas, 1996; Kivela et al., 1999, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). In addition, the name of the dish is expected to correspond with its presentation and customers' expectations (Klosse et al., 2004, cited by Öström et al., 2008) if the maximum effect is to be achieved. It also has to contain a mixture of hard and soft textures and to be rich in flavor (ibid.). Lastly, every single dish has to contain all of the above characteristics.

Excellence through extensive wine list

Since the restaurant industry is characterized by high competition, *"it is fundamental for restaurants to try and develop a special gastronomical experience for increasingly demanding customers (Keyt et al., 1994; Johnson et al., 2005; Asenjo, 2006"* (cited by Berenguer et al., 2009). In this case, wine is one of the ways for developing a special meal experience. The research suggests that *"good food accompanied by suitable wine can greatly enhance the gastronomical experience (Aune, 2002)"* (cited by Berenguer et al., 2009). This is an absolute requirement for fine dining restaurants, which are generally known for a great wine assortment or even their own wine cellars.

2.2.4. Atmosphere

Atmosphere is the fourth aspect in FAMM (Gustafsson, 2004). In FAMM of 1990, atmosphere embraces history of ideas and cultural history, communication (writing and speaking), choreography and body language, color, sounds and light as well as floral decoration (ibid.). Atmosphere is defined in the following way:

> *The atmosphere is very much created by the guests/diners themselves, however, to what extent this process may be supported by creative ideas from the staff is not clear. […] The previously described meal elements may also contribute considerably to the total atmosphere. The atmosphere is here defined as feeling comfortable and at ease. Especially important is the verbal communication at the table between the diners as well with staff within the meeting aspect.*
>
> ibid.

The aspect of atmosphere is often invisible and often discussed in conjunction to the aspect of room. However it is quite influential for the overall dining experience. Unlike all the above aspects, atmosphere is not totally dependent on staff. It is rather a joined creation of restaurant personnel and guests themselves, as pointed out by Gustafsson (2004). Even though it is still not clear how staff can monitor the atmosphere in order to create the most pleasant environment (ibid.), previous research provides some valuable suggestions.

Excellence through music

Music is one of the stimuli, used in restaurant settings, which has a positive impact on customers' behavior and emotions (Baker et al., 1992; Hui et al., 1997, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Furthermore, music can help to create the right image of a restaurant that would be in line with its strategy (Areni, 2003). The studies also show that music is a good promotional tool. For instance, the French music encourages restaurant customers to consume French wine without them even being aware of that fact (North et al. 1997, 1999; Ryan et al. 2000 cited by Edwards and Gustafsson, 2008). Music also replaces a lack of beautiful scenery (Edwards and Gustafsson, 2008).

Usually, classical music is played in fine dining restaurants and there should be no silence as it creates a sense of emptiness and might even have a negative impact on customer satisfaction (Areni, 2003). Even though restaurant management seems to understand the importance of music, some challenges remain; it is still unclear whether the music has to be played in accordance with the positioning of the restaurant, the age of customers or the time of the day (ibid.).

Excellence through color, light, space

Restaurant guests pay attention to space, color, and light, present in dining establishments (Levitt, 1981, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Spatial perception, for instance, affects *"a sense of coziness and intimacy (Ching, 1996)"* (cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Fine dining establishments in particular are recommended to provide restaurant guests with *"ample space to facilitate exploration and stimulation within the environment"* as that might extend the duration of their stay (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Apart from space, color has a great impact on customer perception of restaurant settings as well (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Bellizzi et al., 1983, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). Furthermore, light has to be considered, as it greatly affects shapes and colors, used in the interior design (Ching, 1996, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009). It is also believed that if light corresponds with color

and décor. It makes the visit of restaurant guests more enjoyable (Steffy, 1990, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009).

2.2.5. Management control system

The fifth and the last aspect of FAMM (Gustafsson, 2004) is the management control system. In FAMM of 1990, the management control system corresponds with business economy, computer work, handling statistics, work environment, marketing, organization of the work, and labor law (laws about working with alcohol). FAMM defines the management control system in the following way:

> *The management control system comprises several different systems of an administrative nature, such as economic and legal aspects. There are other rules for the treatment of food and the handling of wine and spirits, rules for personnel, for administration, and economic rules for running a company. […] Summing up the management control systems, it is important that the producers of food have good control systems so that all the products are produced in accordance with the laws formulated by the authorities. […] Finally, all five aspects described above interact and are important in the production situation of meals, but each might be perceived as more and less important by the guest/customer/diner.*
>
> ibid.

Just as the aspect atmosphere, management control system is also frequently invisible. Nevertheless, it is one of the most crucial aspects in all restaurant operations. Management carries a great responsibility, since it is accountable not only for performing the primary tasks, but also for coordinating the remaining aspects within the model (room, meeting, product, atmosphere).

Excellence through knowledge

Muller (1999) analyzed possible future scenarios for restaurant industry and concluded that *"[…] no restaurant enterprise will be able to survive, much less compete, if it does not transform itself into a knowledge-based system"*. The same thought was expressed by Drucker (1995):

> *The manager has a specific tool: information. He does not "handle" people; he motivates, guides, organizes people to do their own work (p. 412). This is the key to building new relationships among time competition, transforming restaurant experience, and brand creation. The manager of the future, Drucker has repeatedly said, will be a knowledge worker.*

cited by Muller, 1999

Muller (1999) further argues that knowledge is like 'glue', without which the best strategic management, brand management or even the best technology will fail to bring success to a restaurant. Hallin and Marnburg (2008) also support the importance of knowledge. However, the scholars regret that *"in the hospitality industry KM [knowledge management] has not achieved the same scale of applications and empirical research as in other fields"* (ibid.). As a result, further research is needed.

Excellence through revenue management

One of the sub-values of excellence is efficiency (Jensen and Hansen, 2007). Therefore, restaurant management is responsible for running the restaurant in an efficient manner, if excellence is to be achieved. This can be attained through revenue management, which is *"the application of information systems and pricing strategies to allocate the right customer at the right price at the right time"* (Kimes and Wirtz, 2003). When customer reaction to revenue management was explored in three different countries (Sweden, Singapore, and United States), the results showed that customers do not object different pricing, applied for lunch and dinner (ibid.). However, different prices for weekday/weekend menus were perceived by customers neutrally or slightly unfair (ibid.). This is what restaurant management has to consider when using revenue management.

Excellence through organizational standards and coworkers' support

If a restaurant has organizational standards in place, the restaurant staff perceives this as an *"adequate support from co workers and supervisors to perform their jobs"* (Susskind et al., 2007). However, co workers' support contributes to higher quality service more than the support of supervisors (ibid.). Consequently, *"a customer-oriented dining staff will have a positive influence on customer trust and commitment (Bove and Johnson, 2000)",* satisfaction, and loyalty (Fornell et al., 1996; Gustafsson et al., 2005) (cited by Meng and Elliott, 2008). However, it is yet unexplored what determines the quality of the relationship between staff and guests in fine dining restaurants (Meng and Elliott, 2008). There is also little known how the quality of this relationship changes across different cultures or groups of customers (ibid.).

Excellence through empowerment of employees and trust

Øgaard et al. (2005) declare that *"[f]ront line personnel often find themselves face-to-face with the customer, and the hierarchy will probably hamper their functioning in the service delivery and lead to lower commitment and efficacy"*. Therefore, the empowerment of employees is

crucial in order to achieve high customer service. In addition, trust is proven to be a significant factor for the overall performance of a restaurant (Davis et al., 2000) and thus should also be considered.

Excellence through increased primary ownership

Kim et al. (2007) study an impact of the ownership type on the cost of restaurant operations and the size of the staff. The obtained results suggest that *"the ownership percentage of the primary owner, management type, and single-family majority/minority ownership yield significant differences in cost of doing business and the size of staff of the firm"* (ibid.). In particular, the size of the staff is noticed to decrease when the primary ownership increases. The cost of business operations is also considerably lower in the restaurants with single-family majority vs. single family minority. Furthermore, business expenses decrease in owner–manager companies, when the ownership increases (ibid.).

Excellence through 'giving' control to restaurant guests

The literature suggests that *"[w]hen entering the service experience the customer is unsure whether the employee will provide the service as desired"* (Namasivayam and Hinkin, 2003, cited by Noone, 2008). Therefore, it is of great importance that customers are given "*a sense of control"* as it has a positive effect on customers' evaluation of service and the overall performance of employees (ibid.). This phenomenon is usually observed in such service contexts, which involve *"greater personal risk or investment in time or money"* (Namasivayam and Hinkin, 2003, cited by Noone, 2008). It also applies to fine dining restaurants, which account for the most expensive food, drinks, and service, and thus create a *"higher risk environment"* (Noone, 2008):

> *Given the significant positive effect that high control has on evaluations of employee performance for more upscale dining experiences, consideration of how to augment customer perceptions of control becomes increasingly relevant for restaurants in that category.*
>
> ibid.

Apparently, there are fewer customers in fine dining restaurants at a time. Therefore, customers have a possibility to *"dictate the pace of the experience"* (ibid.). This also allows the staff to provide a more customized and personal service (ibid.). As a result, the sense of control given to customers will have a positive impact on the overall dining experiences of guests.

Excellence through competitive advantage and the "synthesis" of stimuli

It is claimed that *"[c]ompetitive advantage is important to superior performance in service industries"* (Bharadwaj et al., 1993 cited by Powers and Hahn, 2002). However, restaurant managers must remember the following:

> *Superior skills and resources do not, however, automatically give a business a competitive advantage. They only provide the business an opportunity to leverage its skills and resources to achieve competitive cost and/or differentiation advantages.*
>
> ibid.

In other words, in order to be successful, *"firms must nurture a unique set of skills and resources in a way that competitors cannot imitate (Day and Wensley, 1988; Barney, 1991; Rumelt, 1991; Mahoney and Pandian, 1992)"* (cited by Powers and Hahn, 2002). Furthermore, it is proven that *"firms with management teams capable of administering an optimal number of skill and resource based competitive methods* are able to achieve a performance advantage over those firms that are unable to do so" (Powers and Hahn, 2002).

The discussion on competitive advantage naturally leads to a discussion on the "synthesis" of stimuli, since both viewpoints advocate the importance of management of all the resources and skills simultaneously. FAMM and other theories emphasize many important aspects, which management has to consider in achieving excellence in fine dining. However, *"a range of complementary factors, considered either individually or together, [...] influence the enjoyment of the meal occasion"* (Edwards and Gustafsson, 2008). For example, atmosphere and service quality increase positive emotions of customers (Jang and Namkung, 2009), but the food only eliminates negative emotions and has no power to affect the positive ones (ibid.). As a result, restaurant managers have to consider the synthesis of stimuli or in other words *"both the whole restaurant experience and the different aspects that work together (Stuart 2006)"* (cited by Walter, 2008) when creating excellence.

2.3 Summary of the theoretical framework

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the key concepts and models related to fine dining and excellence as well as management's influence on these concepts. As the discussion shows, there is a close and very complex relationship between the three elements. However, of all the theories presented, only FAMM model considers the function of management as one of

the most important functions in creating excellent dining experience. This is why after looking into various theories; this particular model is chosen to be the focal point in the subsequent steps of this study. As the introduction to FAMM has shown though, this model is under continuous development. Over the years a number of influences and relationships were added or reallocated, but still leaving room for further research. Consequently, all theoretical framework is summarized in the extended version of FAMM (1990) and includes additional theories, not covered by FAMM. Consequently, this version will serve as a basis for exploring the regional restaurants in the countryside of Skåne:

Room	Meeting	Product	Atmosphere	Management control system
Style history	Social psychology	Theory and practical training about food and beverages, wine, beer, coffee, tea	History of ideas and cultural history	Business economy; revenue management knowledge
Architectural style	Emotional theory	Meal forms training: canteen, à la carte, ceremonial meals	Communication: writing, speaking	Computer work
Textiles	Social intercourse in different cultural groups	Food and cooking, creative cooking and creation of meal events; LORE food extensive wine list		Handling statistics
Design	Practical training: interpretation of guests and satisfying their wishes; high customer ; quality; hospitality; interpersonal skills; employee training	Menu planning	Choreography, body language	Marketing
	Professional meetings; backstage and front stage	Sensory analysis	Colour, sounds and light; special perception music	Organization of the work
	Meetings: guests–guests guests' power of control	The hotel and restaurant trade and their history	Floral decoration	Labour law Laws about working with alcohol Competitive advantage: synthesis of stimuli; ownership

Figure 2-8: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM) from the Department of Restaurant and Culinary Arts (1990), *adapted from Gustafsson (2004), and enhanced by theoretical findings of the authors of this thesis (2009)*

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodology of the thesis will be presented. This will be accomplished by first explaining the literature search strategy and the choice of theory. Then a brief overview of the research methodology will be presented, followed by a detailed description of the research purpose, approach, strategy, data collection methods, and the sample selection. Finally, the data analysis as well as validity and reliability issues will be addressed.

3.1 Literature search strategy and the choice of theory

In general, the restaurant industry belongs to the service management sector, which is very broad and encompasses a number of industries, i.e. hospital industry, banking industry, etc. However, the study cannot address all possible research problems within this sector and its industries. Therefore, the research question is narrowed down to fine dining restaurants only with a focus on the managerial role in creating excellence in fine dining restaurants, located in the countryside of Southern Sweden, Skåne. This research idea comes from the authors' personal interest in gastronomy combined with international marketing. Since none of the researchers are originally from Sweden, it is of special interest to explore this subject within this particular market.

The research started with a literature search, relying on a five step strategy, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2007). The initial stage in the literature search process was reading three articles (Gustafsson, 2004; Gustafsson et al., 2006; Edwards and Gustafsson, 2008) within the research area, as recommended by the supervisor of this thesis. The central idea of all the articles was related to the development of meal services and the Five Aspect Meal Model (FAMM). This model is extensively discussed in all of the articles. It is also interesting to see that all articles are written by Swedish scholars and the model itself is developed in Sweden. While the articles were read, notes were taken, the keywords were noted, and some of the references used in the articles were recorded, as they could point out to some further valuable readings.

After completing the above, a final list of keywords was generated, which was in line with the purpose of the study: 'fine dining', 'FAMM', 'restaurant management', 'restaurant industry', 'expectations', 'satisfaction', 'customers', 'experience', 'excellence', 'service management',

‘Sweden’, Skåne’, ‘rural’, and ‘countryside’. Consequently, the library records were checked based on the list of the keywords, including published and electronic documents. This helped to retrieve information, relevant for the study. At this stage many abstracts were reviewed as well as many publications were studied in detail, by continuing to make notes and jot down the keywords and some references.

As the literature search has shown, there was a very limited number of publications on fine dining in particular. Usually, the literature addresses the subject of restaurant management in general. In rare cases, there is a small section dedicated only to fine dining. Furthermore, the literature often considers a number of single factors which management has to master in order to achieve excellence. Many of those factors correspond with the aspects, discussed in FAMM model (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, management control system). Therefore, the theory was chosen in regards to the five aspects of FAMM. This strategy has allowed for a comprehensive literature review and has provided a good theoretical base for the empirical study.

3.2 Research Methodology

The choice of the research design is structured in line with the main purpose of this study, which is to increase the current level of theoretical understanding about the management role in securing excellent dining experiences in fine dining restaurants in the countryside of Southern Sweden. Further on, this purpose is divided into three main objectives. The first and the main objective is to identify which aspects does management consider, when creating excellence in fine dining restaurants in the rural region of Southern Sweden, Skåne. The second objective is to detect if front line personnel and kitchen staff follow the management strategy in creating excellence or if there are potential gaps in i.e., understanding or implementing the restaurant concept. The third and the last objective is to find out if there are any relationships between the aspects, which management considers to be the most important in achieving excellence in fine dining; if so, to describe these relationships in a more specific way than currently done by FAMM. In order to fulfill the all the objectives of the study, exploratory research (Saunders et al., 1997) is conducted.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach is undertaken, which takes this study from a preliminary set of questions to the analysis and conclusions. Finally, a case study is chosen as a research

strategy and multiples methods are applied. A small number of case studies were considered to be an appropriate way for obtaining detailed information about restaurant management considerations and relevant factors when securing excellence in fine dining. This is recommended by Saunders et al. (1997) who consider case studies as a strategy "*[t]o gain a rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted".* The three methods used in this study are interviews, document studies (self produced document and photo elicitation), and observations. All of these tools help to first collect data and second to gain a rich understanding of how excellent fine dining experience is created. Since each data collection tool has its own advantages and disadvantages, the multiple methods help to reduce the method effect as far as possible (ibid.). Moreover, this allows cross checking if information, given by the respondents during the interviews, is understood by the researchers in the same way as it is meant by interviewees. This helps to increase the validity of the analysis and conclusions.

Before the research methodology is explained in greater depth, a more detailed graphical outline of the research methodology is presented below:

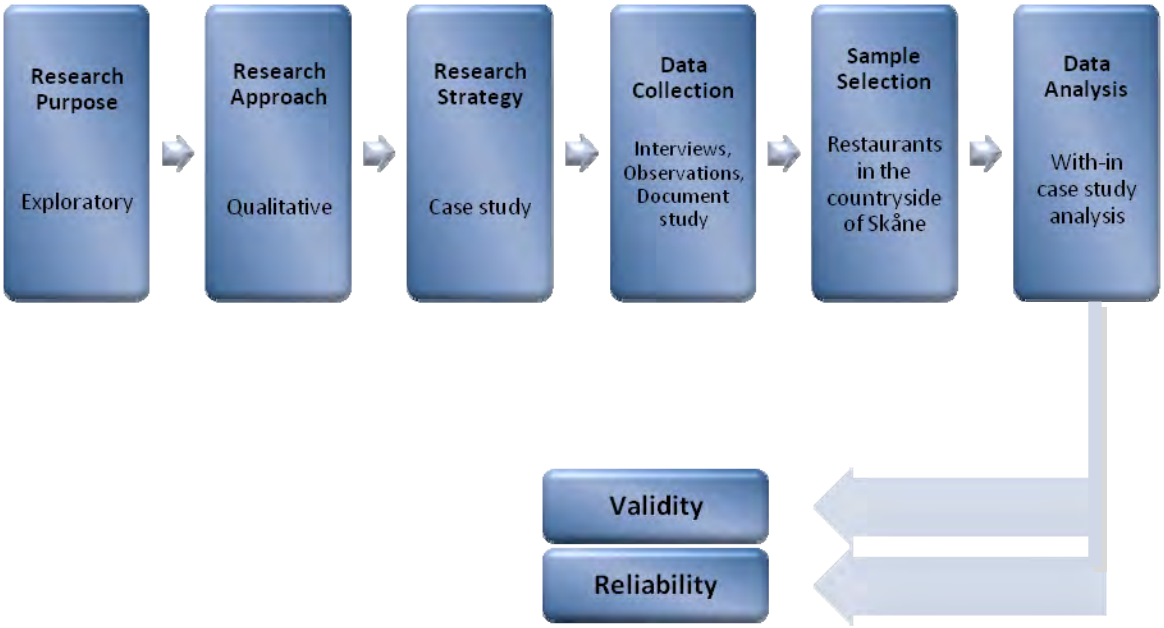

Figure 3-1: Graphical Outline of Research Methodology, *based on Yin (2003)*

This graphical outline represents the authors' ideas about the best possible way of organizing the research process. It starts with the objective of the thesis and ends with achieving valid and reliable study results. Therefore, each of these parts is discussed in detail below.

3.2.1 Research Purpose – Exploratory and Explanatory

As previously noted the overall purpose of this thesis as well as of the first objective is to explore the managerial role in securing excellence in fine dining restaurants and to identify the key factors considered. As a result, the exploratory study suits this purpose the best as it is *"a valuable means of finding out 'what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light'"* (Saunders et al., 1997; Robson, 2002 cited by Saunders et al., 2007). However, as the second and the third objectives of this thesis attempt to look into possible relationships, explanatory studies are added. This type of studies helps to *"establish causal relationships between variables"* (ibid.). As a matter of fact, the combination of exploratory and explanatory studies is often used in practice (ibid.) and it is believed to be the most appropriate for this study.

3.2.2 Research Approach - Qualitative

In general, a qualitative or a quantitative approach could be applied in order to study how restaurant management achieves and secures excellence in fine dining. However, it cannot be answered easily which approach is the most suitable for such a study. Therefore, a further discussion is needed. The qualitative and quantitative approaches are based on two fundamentally different research philosophies. This presents a number of controversial arguments, discussed by Bryman and Bell (2003) and Easterby-Smith et al. (1995). These controversies can be explained by referring to different epistemological beliefs, imbedded in both of the philosophies. Bryman and Bell (2003) seem to suggest that there is a tendency to investigate social phenomena by using a qualitative approach. This appears to be in direct opposition to the positivistic ideas of quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Nevertheless, Saunders et al. (2007) argue that both methodological approaches can be used in social sciences, depending on the nature of the problem being investigated and the information needed.

Generally, a qualitative approach allows studying the problem in-depth and relies on relatively small samples. In contrast, a quantitative approach focuses on a broader and less detailed

investigation of a research problem. Furthermore, a quantitative study is characterized by a quantifiable character which allows measuring the collected data numerically. The discussion revolves around 'if' and 'how' the final study results can be generalized. It is believed that quantitative research allows for generalization of results, because this approach relies on big samples. Meanwhile, qualitative research is based on small samples, which makes the generalization questionable. The results of qualitative research, therefore, are not always easily comparable and accurately measureable. Nevertheless, qualitative research is considered to be a valid research approach and a reliable practice for collecting data, which allows for generalization of conclusions to a certain extent. In addition, Saunders et al. (2007) consider qualitative research as a very flexible method, which offers researchers an opportunity to slightly change the research process, if needed. Since the aim of this thesis is to explore 'what' and 'how' restaurant management does in order to secure excellence in fine dining as well as to suggest additional insights to existing theories, a qualitative approach is chosen. As this approach generates information rich in content, it is expected to help answering the research questions. However, this would not be possible to attain when using the quantitative approach, which generates plain numbers only. Finally, the qualitative approach is recommended when carrying out research, which involves case studies (ibid.) as it is in this research.

3.2.3 Research Strategy – Case study

According to Yin (2003), case studies represent one of the five main research strategies found within the social sciences. Each one of those five strategies suggests a different way of collecting and analyzing empirical evidence, following its own logic (ibid.). Case studies are chosen because of their ability to yield detailed information on an object of study, in this case a small group of related businesses within the gastronomy industry.

Visiting restaurants and interviewing managers and staff members within their daily working environment is considered to be a very good base for gaining an in-depth understanding of individual restaurants and of an increasingly complex restaurant industry in general, within which they operate. Furthermore, this strategy provides an opportunity to investigate how restaurant management may think and act when planning and carrying out excellence in fine dining restaurants. However, the case studies do not involve a verification of the information provided (cp. Yin, 2003); it would anyhow not be possible, since the interviewers have no control over the validity of the information given during the interviews. Therefore, the latter limitation of case studies is not applicable to this thesis.

3.2.4 Data collection of primary data

The primary data was collected by using the multiple methods: semi-structured based interviews, document studies (personal documents and photo elicitations), and observations. All of these methods are described in detail and presented below.

3.2.4.1 Interviews

All of the interviews needed for this study were conducted in five restaurants in the countryside of Skåne. The supervisor of this thesis wrote a letter of recommendation to a number of restaurant owners and/or managers in order to solicit support for this study. After receiving a positive response, the restaurants were contacted by phone in order to arrange the interviews, which would best suit their schedule. The restaurants which have not replied were also contacted by phone to check if they received the letter of recommendation and if they were interested in participating in this study. Finally, the interview schedule was confirmed with three different persons in each restaurant (5 restaurants in total – see Appendix 6-10).

One of the main reasons for using interviews is that this method is considered to be an effective way of gathering information, especially when using case studies (cp. Yin, 2003). In addition, an interview can also be considered as a structured conversation between persons, which allows for immediate clarification of incorrectly understood terms and questions. This interview feature decreases the likelihood of wrong answers which could be the result of misunderstood questions. At the same time, the interviewer can also ask additional questions if provided answers are not clear.

There are different types of interviews which vary from highly restricted to unrestricted ones. However, this study uses semi-structured interviews, which are in between the two. One of the main reasons for choosing semi-structured interviews is to be able to compare the answers provided by respondents, who hold different positions and work in different locations. If unstructured interviews were used, they could have provided more spontaneous insights and a lot of information. However, unstructured interviews can go into many directions, which can complicate the comparison of answers given by the respondents. With that in mind, semi-structured interviews were chosen in spite of the fact that they may become leading, provoke a bias, and increase the chances of receiving inadequate information. In order to overcome this weakness of semi-structured interviews, a considerable amount of time was spent in constructing the questions so that they would help to fulfill the purpose of this study. Therefore,

one of the criteria was to avoid too many direct questions as that could suggest the answers to interviewees. The advantage of such indirect questions is that they allow the participant to provide broad answers, share individual thoughts and ideas, yet help to remain focused. Such open-ended questions are common for interviews, conducted when using a case study strategy (Yin, 2003). The second criterion was to stay away from totally open questions, which could increase the possibility of receiving completely different answers which would be hard to compare.

Consequently, the semi-structured interview resulted in a total of 43 questions divided into two parts. The first part contains some general questions, which help to set a relaxed tone for the interview and also give the interviewees a chance to introduce themselves and provide brief information about the restaurant. The second part of the interview is based on specific questions, which are structured according to FAMM and other theories, discussing how to achieve and secure excellence in gastronomy. In other words, specific questions about each of the FAMM aspects are asked (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, management control system). These specific questions are necessary in order to answer the three self-defined objectives of this thesis.

As previously mentioned, three persons are interviewed in each restaurant. Although the managerial perspective is the main focus of this thesis, front-line and kitchen personnel are interviewed as well. The reason behind this is that staff members considerably contribute to the creation and delivery of excellence in restaurants settings, therefore their answers cannot be ignored. Furthermore, by acting together with restaurant management, they represent the overall managerial perspective. Finally, if excellence is to be achieved, all three parties have to ‘speak the same language’ and this is what the interviews with frontline and kitchen staff will help to reveal. Even though it was previously mentioned that the interview consists of 43 questions, some of them are addressed to restaurant management or personnel members only. For instance, only management is requested to define ‘excellence’ and ‘fine dining’, while the staff is asked the question about work standards they have to follow.

Before conducting the interviews, responsibilities among the interviewers were divided. This allowed capturing all the important information presented during the course of the interview. The interview started with the researchers introducing themselves and presenting the purpose of the study. Furthermore, in order to receive a permission for recording the interview and using the material (cp. Kvale, 1997), the participants were asked to get familiar with the “Research Ethics Protocol” (see Appendix 2). Except of one, none of the participants objected to sign the

document. In that case where no recording was permitted the information was noted manually. It is also worth mentioning that all the respondents agreed to be interviewed in English, even though it is not their mother tongue. This has helped to avoid a translation of the interviews, which could have affected the accuracy of their content. On the other hand, occasionally researchers had to put some extra effort into rewording the questions, if their formulation was not understood by the respondents immediately.

As previously noted, the interviews were conducted in the restaurants. It was considered to be the most convenient location for the participants and the best use of their time. Otherwise, interviewees would have had to come to Lund University, which is relatively far away from where the restaurants are located. As a result, this could have decreased the likelihood of voluntary interview participation. In addition, all of the interviews, except one, were conducted in a quiet area of the restaurant. This certainly had a positive effect on the interview quality.

It is important to keep in mind that interviews involve a risk of gathering information, which does not necessarily reflect the real opinions of participants. This is because interviewees tend to answer in a way which seems to be socially acceptable, rather than present their own thoughts (Tourangeau and Smith, 1996; Dalton et al., 1997; Phillips and Clancy et al., 1972). This is especially the case if questions call for some sensitive data. Therefore, to compensate for possible fake answers, an additional method, document studies, is used.

3.2.4.2 Document studies – Personal documents

Document studies are usually based on existing visual materials, such as magazines, catalogues, books, newspapers, diaries, etc. Often document studies rely on the secondary data. In this research, however, the interviewees were asked to produce a firsthand document which could later on be used for further study. In the beginning of the interview, the respondents were asked to note down their spontaneous ideas on ‘fine dining’. This task was given to management only. Apart from one, all the respondents agreed to participate in this task.

The usefulness of such an exercise is debatable. However, the researchers believe that it provides a certain degree of verification of the answers obtained during the interview. This is due to the fact that the participants were asked to produce drawings or key words without being influenced by the questions and this allowed them to brainstorm freely. As a result the interview content was possible to be compared with the document they had produced. However, it was not only interesting to see whether the content of the document corresponded with the interview, but also to gain a broader understanding of the management concept of fine dining. Further on,

this was complemented by an additional document study of images, which managers were asked to put together at the end of the interview. As a result, it provided even more valuable material for this study.

3.2.4.3 Document studies – Photo elicitation

Photo elicitation is another type of document studies carried out with a help of visual images. According to Harper (2002), photo elicitation enhances conventional empirical research methods, such as interviews. In addition, it is assumed that this method helps to produce a different kind of information, because pictures bring out feelings and memories (ibid.). In other words, pictures *"[c]an evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words"* (ibid.).

As a result, this study uses 37 different images in total which reflect interior design, people, meals, ingredients, outdoor activities, etc. (see Appendix 5). The idea behind employing this type of document study at the end of the interview was to ask managers the same question on 'fine dining' just in a different form. Earlier, when producing the personal documents, managers spontaneously had to draw key words and icons, which described 'fine dining', now they had to complete the same task by using the ready images. After completing the exercise, managers were encouraged to explain their choice of images.

As a result, this document study gave a possibility to check the consistency of information provided by the same people. Furthermore it allowed comparing the answers of different respondents. In addition, these interactive exercises have helped to better engage the respondents into the interview and relax the atmosphere. It is worth mentioning, however, that the authors of this research were limited to a choice of images available in the culinary brochures of Southern Sweden, found at the tourist information center in Lund. The images picked by the researchers might have also affected the choice of respondents when completing the second task.

3.2.4.4 Observations

The third method for gathering data was direct observations, which took place in the restaurants who were participating in the study (see Appendix 6-10). This method was applied for obtaining information on the restaurant environment only. Therefore, neither the interviewees, nor how they welcomed or hosted the researchers was included into the observations, as that was not the goal of the study.

The observation method is a simplistic way of gathering additional data on restaurant environment which might not otherwise come up during the interviews. Furthermore, observations allow gaining a more holistic understanding of the entire context in which the interviews takes place. Thus, the observations in this thesis are used as an additional tool for collecting data, which could help when analyzing the interviews. However, the study does not rely on observations only, as they are considered to be a secondary, not a primary data collection method.

3.2.5 Sample selection

The purpose of this study is to explore restaurants, located in the countryside of Skåne. In other words, this refers to restaurants operating outside big cities, such as Malmö, Trelleborg, Helsinborg, Ystad, and Lund. The region of Skåne is worth exploring since it *"has a long and distinguished history of delicious cooking and reputable chefs, thanks to the ready access to quality ingredients"* (Culinary Skåne, 2009).

The process of sample selection started by reviewing the restaurants, located in the above mentioned geographical region. Since the study concentrates on fine dining, those restaurants, which meet three main fine dining criteria (high quality of food, service, and atmosphere – see Section 2.1.1), were chosen. As none of the researchers are originally from Sweden, the selection of the sample had to rely on the information provided by third parties. Consequently, the following three sources were used: "Countryside Hotels Sweden 2009" (a list of restaurants offering accommodation and located in the rural areas of Sweden); "Culinary Skåne 2009" (a list of restaurants and inns, seeking to preserve Skåne culinary traditions); "White Guide 2009" (an extensive guide of over 500 best restaurants in Sweden).

Although, there is a great variety of restaurants within the countryside of Skåne, due to time and distance constraints of this study, only the restaurants located in a close proximity to Lund were chosen. Yet the best representation of restaurants was sought after by applying the snowball system (Trost, 2001). It was soon discovered that the restaurant participation rate was not very high. As a result, this had affected the sample of the study and thus the empirical data. Therefore, the researchers were even more grateful to those restaurants, who agreed to take part in the project. Accordingly, all the restaurants (see Appendix 6-10) within the sample belong to the 'Good Class' or 'Very Good Class' restaurant category, as suggested by the "White Guide 2009" (see Appendix 4). However, the sample is not limited to 'Very Good Class' only as this category does not provide a sufficient number of restaurants in the Skåne region.

The fact that interview appointments were scheduled with the managers via phone had affected the number of interviews. As previously noted, the aim of the study was to interview not only management, but also representatives of kitchen and frontline personnel. However, the researchers could not influence this process directly; they had to rely on the management to make these appointments with personnel working in the restaurant on the day of the interview. While three out of five restaurants complied with the study requirements, the other two did not, because the personnel were not available. Although the interview conditions were discussed prior to the arrival, the changes were announced only after the interview with management was over. Apparently, this deviation from the intended methodology could have influenced the findings. Nevertheless, a total of 11 interviews (instead of 15) were conducted which resulted in a sufficient amount of empirical data needed for this study. In any case, the number of interviews itself does not necessarily affect the quality of the study. This is due to the fact that no clear and specific directives can be given for qualitative research methods as the volume of interviews can vary extremely depending on the objectives of the study (Kvale, 1997).

3.2.6 Data analysis

As previously mentioned, the data collected for this study is of qualitative nature. This means that the collected data does not come in a standardized format as opposed to quantitative data. As a result, the collected data need to be categorized before it can be analyzed. This allows achieving meaningful results and not only presenting impressionistic views (Saunders et al., 1997). In this particular case it means that a deductive approach is used. Thus, FAMM functions as a tool for creating the concept of categorization and using it for data analysis. In line with that, all the collected data were allocated according to one of the aspects of FAMM (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, and management control system). If the obtained information could not be fitted into the above aspects, additional categories were added. According to Saunders (1997), this could be considered as an inductive approach.

The deductive approach used for analyzing the data was also applied when developing the study objectives, constructing interview questions, and categorizing the empirical data. Apparently this approach can be debatable. Even though Yin (1994, cited by Saunders et al., 1997) considers the deductive method as a logical and consistent, Bryman (1988, cited by Saunders et al., 1997), sees in it a risk *"[o]f introducing a premature closure on the issues to be investigated"*. Therefore, an iterative approach was applied when analyzing the data in order to make up for a potential deficiency.

3.2.7 Validity and Reliability

In order to produce a high quality study, validity and reliability have to be secured (Yin, 2003; Saunders, 2007; Bryman, 2007). Validity refers to how well the chosen methods measure what is being measured. Meanwhile, reliability implies that the procedures used throughout the study are documented in detail, which enables an identical study, if desired (cp. Yin, 2003). In order to secure the validity of this thesis, similar methods were applied. Even though interviews are seen as one of the most important tools for data collection, they involve a risk of gathering unnecessary information, which does not necessarily reflect the true opinions of respondents. In addition, the subjectivity of researchers or the formulation of interview questions can also threaten the accuracy of data of qualitative studies. Therefore, this presents some challenges in securing validity and reliability (Kvale, 1997). With that in mind, one interview format was used, which allowed for two types of comparisons, when relevant. The first type assesses the answers of respondents within the same category, e.g. management vs. management. The second one evaluates the replies of interviewees within the same restaurant, e.g. management vs. frontline vs. kitchen personnel. Document studies (self-produced documents and photo elicitations) allowed using the first type of comparison when analyzing responses of managers. These documents were created at the same point of time of all the interviews. Moreover, the same information was given to all the participants.

The above also applies to observations which focused on restaurant environment only. Since the interviews were not conducted at the same time of the day in each of the restaurants, the fact how the researchers were welcomed was not taken into account. This was considered to be too subjective as that could have been influenced by the work load or other factors. To increase the reliability, the observations were done at least by two out of three researchers and the results were immediately documented (cp. Yin, 2003).

Validity is another feature which determines the quality of the study that can also be challenging to secure. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), interview validity can be evaluated through intuitive processes. In this study the validity was achieved by carefully pre-testing the interview questions and checking how they are comprehended and answered. As this process is very subjective, the researchers asked a person who is unrelated to this study to test and evaluate the interview questions. As a result, this has increased the validity of the research. Even though this qualitative study uses multiples methods (interviews, document studies, and observations), however, a full accuracy is not possible to achieve. This is due to the fact that the effectiveness of each method used is dependent on participants' willingness to engage into the study and

researchers' ability to avoid the influences of their social backgrounds, experiences, and emotions.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION BASED ON THEORY AND EMPIRICAL DATA

In this chapter empirical data will be presented by simultaneously incorporating a discussion of the findings. It is hoped that such a structure will help to enhance the understanding of empirical material. Thus, the chapter will first present general findings, followed by specific findings related to all five aspects of FAMM (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, management control system). Later on three research purposes will be addressed in the light of empirical findings as they embody the overall purpose of the study.

As explained in the methodology (see Chapter 3), the data for the analysis were gathered through interviewing three different persons with different responsibilities in five restaurants in the countryside of Skåne. The method of interviewing was chosen since interviewing is regarded as one of the most appropriate tools to collect personal and deep insights from people directly involved, e.g., in the process of serving excellence in fine dining restaurants on a daily basis. The main idea was to develop a further understanding and knowledge of multiple factors considered as important by owners/managers when serving excellence in fine dining restaurants. The formulation of the interview questions is based on the theory presented in the thesis.

The interviews consisted of two principal parts:

1. General – This general part was included in order to start the interview in a relaxed atmosphere, giving the owner/manager and employees the chance to introduce themselves, the restaurant, and present some information about the restaurant. At the same time owners/managers were asked for definitions of excellence and fine dining.

2. Specific – In the specific part the five aspects of FAMM were considered. This means that specific questions in relation to each of the aspects were asked:

   2.2.1 Room

   2.2.2 Meeting

   2.2.3 Product

   2.2.4 Atmosphere

2.2.5 Management control system

This detailed questioning was necessary in order to answer the three self-defined objectives of this thesis, which can also be stated in the following slightly abbreviated way (for the full wording see section 1.3):

- Which aspects are considered by the management when excellence in fine dining is created?
- Does everybody in a restaurant know about the factors/aspects considered by the management in the concept for fine dining as far as this is relevant to his/her position in the restaurant?
- Can one conclude from the interviews that some aspects mentioned above are considered more important when excellence in fine dining experiences are created or are they all equally important, as this is suggested by FAMM (Gustafsson, 2004). In case there are visible relationships between the aspects, a discussion about possible extensions or a restructuring of FAMM should be carried out.

In the analysis and discussion no restaurant names are mentioned when empirical findings are presented. The intention of this study is not to compare the restaurants investigated with each other or to classify them. It is also not intended to judge any presented opinions and comments made by the interviewees. The information gathered is supposed to provide further insights in general about knowledge with regards to academic concepts of fine dining and how excellence is achieved within fine dining restaurants through restaurant management. Therefore, when restaurants are mentioned in the analysis, they are referred to as the first restaurant, a second restaurant, etc.

The findings are presented in detail in order to allow a reader to verify if the conclusions can be drawn based on the empirical material gathered. The findings are presented according to the five aspects of FAMM. Not all restaurants provided information or were sometimes very brief on questions asked in the interviews. The presentations of the findings can therefore only include material from those restaurants that had expressed a clear opinion on a specific question. If brief answers pointed in the same direction as more elaborate answers provided by other interviewees, those brief answers were also not always presented separately.

General part

The information provided in the general part is included in the description of the restaurants in Appendix 6-10. In addition to information gathered regarding these general questions, one document study was included in this part of the interview. The document study required a drawing of a little picture by the interviewee or writing down some keywords related to the ideas about fine dining that a restaurant owner/manager may have. If the word excellence was mentioned in this context, a definition of excellence was asked for as well. If excellence was not mentioned, a specific question regarding how the word excellence would fit into their ideas/concepts was asked.

In the information provided by the interviewees it became obvious that none of the restaurants within the study spontaneously wanted to subscribe to the term fine dining without specific comments and further explanation.

When asking the restaurants about the term fine dining and how they would categorize their locations, three out of the five restaurants surveyed considered their dining places as fine dining restaurants, but one restaurant, e.g., emphasized that it is not just fine dining, but rather an organic fine dining. One restaurant owner did not want to classify his dining place as fine dining, but conceded being mostly perceived as fine dining by their customers. It was interesting that this owner had a very specific idea about what fine dining is. He referred to customers feeling uncomfortable and to "*crispy white table cloth"* in combination with impersonal and snobby service, *"like to sit on top of the guest"*. Another restaurant owner would definitely not consider his restaurant as fine dining. Instead, the owner sees it more like a type of a family restaurant. This is not only due to the fact that they also serve many families and even offer special family brunches on Sundays, which is practiced by two other restaurants as well, but mainly through the atmosphere which is characterized by a relaxing and "*feeling-like-being-at-home'* environment. This, in his opinion, would create a personal and family atmosphere.

In addition to the interviews, a document study was carried out as mentioned in the methodology part. This document study was intended to facilitate the investigation about the perceived concept of fine dining. Four study participants produced a personal document; one of them actually produced a little drawing. The little drawing (see Appendix 14) represents a cocktail glass with a martini and a cocktail cherry. The keywords written down by the second participant (see Appendix 13) point in a similar direction by focusing on the Grand Hotel in Stockholm and the word snobbish (snobbigt). This points out that the perception of fine dining

was negative and related to top class restaurants in large cities. The other two documents (see Appendix 11-12) relate more to the concept of the restaurant owned or managed by the participants, although it was not the intention of the task. Terms like "*do not over do it",* but at the same time also "*exceed expectations*", were mentioned.

When the restaurant owners/managers classify their locations, it is interesting to see that actually all restaurants mention several aspects relevant to their concepts that clearly characterize the restaurants as fine dining locations, if referred to the fine dining theories by Wood and Brotherton (2008) and Walker (2001; 2007). One restaurant owner emphasized that they are fine dining but *"we try not to be snobbish"*. They want their customers to feel like being at home and in a very relaxed environment. No standards exist, e.g., when to eat, what to eat or how to dress for dinner. The customer determines these issues. Approximately 15 years ago, fine dining in his memory was stiff, strict and formal. That concept has changed. Today, according to his opinion, it's about high quality. High quality, especially, of the food and of the personnel, is a very important part in the restaurant. The kitchen should be pro-active and should surprise the customer by combining interesting flavors and ingredients. Another restaurant owner mentioned service and quality as indispensable preconditions for fine dining and for achieving the overall goal of exceeding customer expectations. Quality needs to be existent and recognizable in all details, starting from fresh flowers, exclusive glasses and china, design of the menu to perfect service, provided by all personnel involved. Furthermore, a focus was laid on knowledge enabling staff *"to walk with the customer".* In other words, the ability of personnel to identify customer needs and expectations shapes the basis for exceeding customer expectations. A third restaurant expressed the focus on high quality in all detail, but especially on high quality of food, which is achieved through a strict idea of organic and ecological values. Another restaurant emphasizes high quality, not just only of the food provided, but in all details as the experience of the restaurant in its total complexity matters. Similar statements were made by the last restaurant.

The conclusion that can therefore be drawn is that all restaurants seem to have spontaneously antiquated concepts of 'fine dining' and restaurants in larger cities in mind when they were asked about the term 'fine dining'. They did not want to have such a concept in their own restaurant. It seems that this perception of fine dining is rather negative. Quite naturally it is not possible to use un-adapted concepts of restaurants in larger cities in rural areas. One also has to consider that customs and habits in a society constantly change. Sweden is a less formal society (cp. Hofstede, n.d.). This is reflected in the service sector as well. However, one should

not focus too much on the visible features of fine dining. When one turns away from the visible features and focuses on the underlying factors, considerations and aspects for the characterization of fine dining it becomes obvious that a number of these characteristics are taken into consideration in the concepts of the restaurants surveyed. One could therefore say that what the restaurants surveyed wanted to achieve is fine dining with a local relationship/touch or another specific feature that involves their location and their facilities/products or services. Insofar all restaurants have implemented a locally adapted concept of fine dining based on general principles that can be found throughout the restaurant industry whenever successful fine dining experiences are created. This will be demonstrated in more detail when the findings of the specific parts of the interviews are presented.

None of the interviewees mentioned the term excellence. In previous parts of the thesis the importance and the concept of excellence (Jensen and Hansen, 2007) was discussed by the authors. Excellence, according to the interpretations of the authors, is considered pertinent to fine dining and used to express the concept of fulfilling customers' expectations when visiting a fine dining location. This is why the question was raised in the interviews if the word excellence would mean something within the concept of the restaurant. For the first restaurant, excellence functions as a synonym for quality. The manager emphasized already, when explaining the idea of fine dining, that the most important issue is to exceed customers' expectations. This, according to the manager, can only be achieved by the highest possible levels of dining service and quality. In other words, differentiation of fine dining locations, according to this manager, can only be achieved by outstanding services and quality and by doing so, going beyond customer expectation through, e.g., little surprises like an extra course (4 instead of 3 that were ordered) with a glass of wine. For the second restaurant excellence was understood as being better than fine. It is about high quality in every detail as the holistic impression of *"the meal"* matters. For the third restaurant excellence seems to be incorporated in the concept of fine dining. It stands for providing the experience the customer expects. This restaurant, according to the manager, sells experiences. This means every detail has to be pleasant and in harmony with all other details surrounding the meal experience. This is not about overdoing it by any means. On the contrary, it implies understanding the customer's expectations. It also means to support the customer and to help him/her to feel as comfortable as possible in relation to him/her personal situation when coming to the restaurant. Subsequently, it does not necessarily mean to serve him/her, e.g., the finest meal available, but to guide him/her to order something that she/he perceives as perfect in the given situation. In contrast, the two remaining restaurants

could not see the relevance of the term excellence in the context of fine dining. One of them could not see it when the term is used by the restaurant. For that manager the term is more interesting when customers use it in order to describe the restaurant. This manager thought it should be the customer classifying restaurants by using such terms. The term seems otherwise to be too abstract to this manager in order to consider it as a synonym for high quality.

Within the already mentioned document study, one task was a photo elicitation asking the survey participants (owners/managers only) to select specific images from a collection of pictures (see Appendix 5) depicting scenes in restaurants, the countryside, food items, front-line personnel and customers. They were supposed to select those pictures that they would link to an excellent fine dining experience. The original collection consisted of 37 pictures. All participants took part in this task. It was interesting to see that the selection of pictures and explanation provided why these photos were chosen partly related to the personal document created before in the document study. Two participants selected most of the pictures (Appendix 15 – 27 pictures and Appendix 17 – 17 pictures). Both had fairly complex concepts integrated in their restaurants and therefore selected their photos with a lot of comments. The participant with most photos focused in his restaurant on organic fine dining. Subsequently pictures showing natural food and authentic countryside items were selected. Anything that was considered artificial was not chosen. The second participant had a personal and relaxed concept implemented. Staff was a very important part of that concept. There was a big overlap in the pictures chosen by this and the previous participant. Apart from the numbers of the pictures chosen the second participant had more pictures of staff members. The third participant has a similar concept as the second participant but focuses more on interaction between customers and customers and staff. This is reflected in his selection of pictures. The other two participants had chosen only three photos each. One of them explained that he selected one photo for each of the three pillars his restaurant is build on: food (product), staff (meeting) and atmosphere. The second participant in this group focused on luxury food items only.

In summary, although none of the interviewees used the term excellence in explaining fine dining, three out of five linked it in the additional question to features described by the authors in earlier parts of this thesis (see Section 2.1.2). This finding is not surprising. The interviewees are no English native speakers and academics with a focus on restaurant sciences and familiar with specifically used terms and concepts in this context. It can therefore not be expected that somebody developing a restaurant concept as a practitioner with a different mother tongue spontaneously describes academic definitions of the concept excellence. However, it is

remarkable that at least three owners/managers had similar ideas and thoughts about this term when being asked about it. To a certain degree the results of the photo elicitation support the statements made regarding the meaning of excellence. Therefore it seems appropriate to draw similar conclusions about the term excellence as regarding the term fine dining and its use. Even though the term excellence was not used by the interviewees three of them seem to have integrated aspects covered by the term excellence into the concepts of their restaurants. Therefore one can say that excellence is a relevant and important concept in the context of this thesis.

The discussion about fine dining and excellence and how these terms are understood by the restaurants in context to their specific business ideas and concepts can be seen as an introduction, to the more specific part of the interview. In a way the first part serves not only as an introduction but as a control function as well. All restaurants explained that although they have not used the terms fine dining and excellence specifically, they indirectly have implemented adapted concepts. This should therefore be reflected in the answers to the questions about the five aspects of FAMM.

Specific part

The specific part contained at least three questions related to each of the five aspects (room, meeting, product, atmosphere and management control system) considered as important by FAMM (Gustafsson, 2006) when developing a meal experience.

Room

The answers to the question about managers' considerations when deciding and choosing the restaurant facilities were different. They were largely dependent on the fact if the interior of the location was already set up when the owners/mangers took it over or not.

One restaurant was able to totally design the restaurant according to their ideas. The dining room has large windows offering customers a spectacular view which is part of the idea of creating the feeling of being at home overlooking garden and scenery behind it. The large tables for serving the meals are also used for serving several couples at one table in order to shape a basis for communication with each other, if customers are interested in talking to their table neighbors. The kitchen is open to the restaurant in order to support a total customer experience by indirectly participating in the food preparation process as well as to stimulate further senses,

e.g., seeing and smelling. The oven in the kitchen used for preparing several dishes in a traditional oven as an integral part of the restaurant concept. Materials used for, e.g., the walls, tiles and colors are consciously chosen to support their concept of relaxed Skåne region atmosphere with an exotic flavor. The idea was to make use of the local resources existent and combine them with the owner's passion and interest for other countries.

The second restaurant strictly chose materials, colors, decoration items etc. supporting the concept of being organic and ecological. The ideas behind the manager's concept were to create an authentic and traditional atmosphere emphasizing the beauty and characteristics of the Skånsk region they are located in. Logically, all details have to be beautiful but also practical and fitting to the concept, where not overdoing is an important aspect. The owner emphasized that the environment has to support the concept, in this case, the food. Tradition, nature, basics, and organic describes the intended atmosphere, best reflected in material and decoration used. The atmosphere is mainly created by the walls of the farm house, built in the true traditional Skåne style.

The third restaurant could not influence all details in the restaurant as it was taken over from the previous owner. However, the entire hotel as part of that location had to be re-built which offered the possibility to re-design that part. This re-designed part clearly reflects the ideas of the current owner, which to a certain extent correspond with the ideas of the previous owner. Therefore no strong deviations in the overall concept of the location are visible. The concept is to create a warm and really welcoming, relaxed atmosphere, just as if one would enter one's own house. The new owners put many thoughts into the renovation of the rooms as they form a part within the overall concept of the location, which not only consist of a restaurant. After all, the entire customer experience matters, including rooms, if hotel guests are concerned. At the same time, *"details matter*", therefore several small items were added and changed during the last years to shape a holistic environment presenting a truly relaxed atmosphere.

The forth restaurant was not so much personally involved in the considerations of the restaurant facilities. History and the family who owns the location in the fifth generation are mainly responsible for the physical look of the restaurant. In addition of course rules, regulations (e.g. occupational health and security) and demand (modern customer needs in a historic environment, i.e. conference/meeting facilities) are responsible for the physical environment. Demand for conference rooms forced the location to incorporate special rooms facilitated with expected technical and functional devices according to current standards. Due to these external

and not necessarily avoidable influences the room itself is not alone responsible for creating the intended atmosphere. Therefore the most important aspects or leading words of the management are inspiration, harmony and closeness. Closeness is furthermore subdivided in being close to developments in the gastronomy industry, being close to the customer and being close to the ingredients, meaning to know where ingredients come from in all detail.

The last restaurant benefits from its proximity to the water. The impressions to be created by the interior were therefore intentionally reduced in order to underline the beauty of the nature outside. This is supported by large windows which allow overlooking the entire bay.

In summary, all restaurants have chosen an interior supporting the concept of the restaurant. In all interviews it was stated that the overall impression created by the rooms and facilities need to be harmonic and balanced for creating the intended atmosphere. A considerable effort was vested in all restaurants in the set up of the rooms. This underlines once more that the impression created by the room and the facilities is considered a very important aspect in the restaurant concept. However, although the room as such is important, rooms cannot exist in isolation. They have a clear support function. All owners/managers have confirmed in their answers that this is the case. The rooms in the restaurant with the organic food concept have to fit into that concept. This was achieved by using natural colors and traditional materials in the rooms, e.g., colors of the region and wooden interior. The charm of the old walls of the historic farm house supports the character of the restaurant even more by symbolizing continuity and sustainability. Artificial interior would destroy the message of the restaurant. Similar statements can be made regarding the room concept of the restaurant close to the coast specialized in fish and seafood. This restaurant benefits from its location close to the sea. The interior, therefore, has to be restrained in order to not destroy the impression created by the sea.

In conclusion, the room is very important, but not an independent and active aspect of FAMM. The room heavily depends on the concept of a restaurant. When looking at the aspects in FAMM, it became obvious that room is in fact a passive aspect, when management influence in the creation of excellent fine dining experiences is concerned. When the word passive is used, it is used with the meaning that the concept of a room is not changed every day. However, the aspects meeting, product and atmosphere are certainly more active, as they require constant involvement of the management during the daily routine. This is a different quality when referring to the daily activities of the management.

Meeting

The next aspect, the management was asked about, is the aspect meeting. This comprises any personnel directly or indirectly involved interacting with customers. All managers emphasized that the main focus of the entire restaurant is on the customer. When asking the management about any existing protocols that employees have to follow when interacting with customers, all restaurant managers replied in a similar way. In all the places managers set certain standards, but leave room for individual actions and independent thinking of the staff. Staff members have to be skilled where it matters most, which means that, e.g., cooks had to pass a formal and traditional education as a cook. Front-line personnel on the other hand require not only formal competence and skills (see Section *Excellence through interpersonal skills of service providers*). The impression created by front-line personnel depends to a large degree on personality, attitude, and experiences from the gastronomy industry (learning by doing). A traditional and formal education related to gastronomy for front-line personnel is therefore only one aspect among many others. One restaurant went one step further and required also higher general education for front-line personnel.

In one restaurant many comments were made about front-line personnel. They have to be knowledgeable about the menu and the wines and skilled in order to provide high quality service. Individualism and experience seem to be a common factor in all places to make staff competent. In one restaurant employees feel free to ask questions and support each other. The most important skill required is to understand the needs of the guest (see Section *Excellence through guest reading*). In order to be able to do this, staff members have to be well educated. Therefore only people who finished a higher education are employed. Furthermore staff members have to be motivated and interested in people. When fulfilling theses aspects than everything else can be learned by doing.

Another restaurant offers constantly micro education about everything regarding restaurant and hotel. Standards existent consist of three leading words: inspiration, harmony and closeness mentioned in the previous part. The most important issue is being close to the customer, which implies personal contact with customers as often as possible and to create a personal feeling for the customer. Therefore this location still uses old and heavy keys for the hotel rooms and no modern keycards, so that people usually bring the key to the reception when leaving the room which generates many extra contacts between customers and employees throughout the day. There are no standards regarding front-line personnel in this restaurant, but a few leading

principles are agreed together with the responsible person for each department as *"standards take away free thinking"*.

The third restaurant seems to create the most flexible and open minded working atmosphere of all restaurants surveyed. The managers like to hire people who want to stay for a long time, and most of them do (the kitchen chef and frontline personnel are employed for already 10 years). The managers provide a lot of freedom to their employees and room for individual actions in order to foster their confidence. The owners want to trust their personnel and they seem to do that, indeed. According to the statements made, there were never any negative surprises when they were not present in the restaurant, e.g., when they had vacation and staff had to run the restaurant independently from advice and control of the owner.

In summary, the aspect meeting is an aspect more independent from the concept of a restaurant. It is, however, very much influenced by management ideas and a main focus of their daily activities. The concept of a restaurant is defined in a longer process and period of time. The room is a product of that process. The customer, however, is an individual and therefore different. Even the same persons can have different moods. Therefore meeting is a dynamic and active aspect. The staff members involved have to be able to develop a sense for the situation in order to be able to spontaneously adapt to the customer's expectations. This is difficult to plan and train in advance. Insofar meeting represents a fundamentally different type of aspect in FAMM. It is therefore also understandable that management focuses on this aspect more when asked about daily management tasks. It was noticed during the interview that more ideas and expectations existed regarding this aspect. This would confirm the conclusion that this is an active aspect and more relevant when daily management influence in creating excellent dining experiences is concerned.

Product

The next aspect, the management was asked about, is the product. Without any exception the food served is the main focus in all restaurants. All managers emphasized the high quality of ingredients used. They are rich in flavor, meaning that only seasonal vegetables and ingredients comply with these high standards. The same is true for wines and drinks offered. However, although all managers emphasize the high quality of ingredients, they all have slightly differing ideas about this issue.

One restaurant understands high quality as 100% culinary and organic. The concept developed in this restaurant, according to the manager, is unique in entire Europe, except one other

location in Bavaria, Germany. The concept entails that anything used and sold in the restaurant is produced and grown on the farm belonging to the restaurant. No pre-produced products are acceptable to the manager. It took almost 24 years until the farm was able to produce the meet used today in the restaurant. This was partly due to the fact that it took time to reproduce old breeds of animals growing up in a traditional way. It takes longer for an animal, like a pig or a cow, to grow up in a traditional way but this delivers a totally different type of quality meat, rich in flavor, consistence and health (see Section *Excellence through food* characteristics). Similar ideas were developed for the cultivation of vegetables and fruits. Old plant species and, additionally, traditional ones from the region of Skåne are used only. Limitations for creating the menu arise from climate and soil. Only what is 'growing' in the garden can be used. Only organic wines are served.

Two other restaurants also stress the high quality of ingredients, but high quality arises here from buying all ingredients needed from known and local suppliers, as far as possible. Their menus are adjusted to seasonal availability, too. As one of these restaurants serves relatively many meals, especially during their high season, they cannot always rely on local suppliers only as larger quantities can sometimes not be delivered.

A forth restaurant tries to buy ingredients as far as possible from local suppliers, but usually not all ingredients needed can be found at local producers at any time. The fifth restaurant purchases ingredients according to the daily demand. The concept of the kitchen is focused on fish and seafood. Fish is bought fresh on a daily basis.

This aspect has a parallel relationship to the aspect meeting. Unlike the aspect room, it is also an active aspect that requires active management involvement on a daily basis. However, the aspect product is not independent of the concept of a restaurant. In this respect a relationship exists to the aspect room as a significant aspect in close relationship to the concept. Meeting is not fully, but less dependent on the concept.

Atmosphere

The atmosphere was never mentioned in isolation. During the entire interview permanent remarks about how a specific feature/aspect (e.g. what colors were used in a room, how the personnel were dressed, light, music etc.) would fit to the overall atmosphere to be created were made. The atmosphere was seen as a very important factor in all restaurants. All restaurant owner/managers stressed the holistic approach for creating the intended atmosphere through harmonizing and balancing the before mentioned different aspects. However, the restaurant

concept defines the frame in which a certain atmosphere is to be created and how to adjust supporting aspects.

One restaurant builds on the idea of providing a relaxed atmosphere, meaning that details matter for creating the holistic feeling of relaxation. The atmosphere is created through many larger and smaller interior items which in combination with the meals and personnel create the intended typical identity.

For another restaurant the culinary and organic food is concept and focus. Any other aspect needs to be adjusted and surround the concept in order to support the experience of organic food.

The third restaurant reflects on the heritage of the restaurant. This supports an atmosphere providing a feeling of heritage, taking the changing interpretations of customers into account. It is therefore about timeless traditions without being old-fashioned.

The forth restaurant wants to create an atmosphere focusing on local traditions in the region of Skåne with a touch or flavor of the Mediterranean region, which means all aspects have to be carefully balanced in order to support this idea.

This aspect has an active and a passive component. It is in relationship to the aspect room (passive-influence of the room on the atmosphere) and to the aspect meeting (active-how personnel can influence the atmosphere in a restaurant). There are a few other components that have an influence on this aspect as well. Light and sound, e.g., is very important. These components can be influenced actively. This is why the interviewees had very specific ideas and obviously focused on this aspect intensively during their daily routines.

Management control system

Each of the restaurant owners and managers has an own individual way of running their business and managing the place. All individual management philosophies have to support the development of the locations and to integrate the employees into the concept of the different restaurants.

The first restaurant owner describes his philosophy as *"management by walking"* around. He is everywhere whenever needed and he keeps an eye on anything that happens within the restaurant, the hotel and the farm. According to him, there is no need for close supervision but it

is good to be aware of possible problems or developments that might occur during the day. The owner is also present during the evenings, talking to customers and purring wine.

In the second restaurant a hierarchy of employees was clearly visible and each of the employees is supervised by someone who has to report back to a higher organizational level. The general manager describes the working environment as a good organizational culture, where everyone knows her/his place and daily tasks. The manager also believes in hiring the right people for the right jobs.

In the third restaurant the owner believes in not getting personally too involved in everything. He suggested that any individual employee needs certain freedoms and a room to maneuver without being constantly controlled. This creates responsible individual that one can trust. The owners do not live close to their restaurant and they feel comfortable to leave the restaurant within the responsibility of their staff members when they have vacation.

In the forth restaurant the management control philosophy was explained as focusing on the customer on the spot. In other words all management controls focus on the customer in the restaurant. As such, management control is understood as an active task in the background of the restaurant.

In summary, the answers provided to this aspect are difficult to compare. According to FAMM, management control involves marketing, administration etc. This was only mentioned by one interviewee. All other interviewees stressed the active part of being present in the restaurant during the daily routine. Also here different ideas exist – from direct interaction with guests (in two cases) to just only being in the background as support, when needed. When considering FAMM, this aspect is the most complex. It is unclear why this complexity was only seen by one interviewee. One explanation could be that all questions before focused on the active parts of FAMM. It was therefore logically that the active side of management control in the daily business became the focus of the answers. Management control as such is otherwise also an aspect that is less dependent on the concept of a restaurant. It has, like meeting, a strong personal component. The answers focusing on the active part of the controls may allow the conclusion that management control has a very important role to play when the three aspects meeting, product and atmosphere are concerned.

4.1 First objective of the study

The first purpose of this thesis was to identify which aspects/factors are considered by the management of a restaurant when excellent fine dining experiences are to be created. In this respect it was also important to find out if FAMM is a model that can be applied for such a question.

Therefore in the beginning of the pervious part of this thesis the findings with regard to the description of the terms fine dining and excellence were presented. As far as fine dining and excellence is concerned it has to be considered that the interviewees were not familiar with academic concepts related to these terms. However, the information provided by the interviews allows for the conclusion that the ideas behind the concepts were applied in all restaurants surveyed. Insofar one could refer to a concept of an adapted fine dining experience in the context of the countryside of Skåne.

In the interviews sufficient information was provided about the five aspects in FAMM that allows for the conclusion that the model as such is valid and of relevance to the restaurants surveyed. In addition, based on the information provided, it seems to be possible to furthermore characterize the five aspects in different ways. Three aspects are considered in all detail when daily management routine is concerned – meeting, product and atmosphere. Therefore these aspects can be considered as active. In contrast the aspect room is important, but does not require involvement of management on a daily basis. It can therefore be considered as passive. This aspect is, however, very important when the relationship to the concept of the restaurant is concerned. When focusing on the concept of the restaurant it is possible to distinguish not only between active and passive aspects, but also between concept dependent and less dependent aspects. Meeting and management control are less dependent aspects. Room, product and atmosphere have a dependent relationship to the concept. Management control, in addition, is a complex aspect involving active (direct involvement in the restaurant) and passive (administration) tasks. If confirmed in other studies, this could lead to further developments of FAMM.

4.2 Second objective of the study

The second purpose of the study was to find out how far the employees in a restaurant were involved in the concept of creating excellent fine dining experiences. This objective has mainly a control function focusing on the communication within a restaurant organization. Staff members that are not involved in the concept will most likely not be able to support the management

ideas. Therefore a number of formal interviews in four restaurants were carried out. The findings are summarized below.

It was interesting to see that the staff members more or less offered information and insights similar to the answers provided by the management. The staff members focused in their answer on the aspects that they were involved most – i.e. front-line personnel on meeting and atmosphere, kitchen personnel on product. Less detailed than management they were able to explain the basic concepts in the restaurant and could even defend the ideas involved in their individual aspects.

This was interesting, however, not surprising. One explanation for the identical views and explanations could be that in order to create excellent fine dining experiences staff members have to be part of this mission. All restaurants surveyed exist for quite a while and are leading culinary places for a number of years. One restaurant owner had pointed out that the personnel employed in the restaurant do not fluctuate. Personnel interaction between management and staff as well as continuity is an important factor. This aspect, however, is not really included in FAMM.

4.3 Third objective of the study

The third purpose of this thesis is to find out if factors mentioned by the management, as presented in the first purpose, are a simple list of factors or if relationships between these factors and other aspects of the FAMM model exist. If so, can these relationships be described in a more specific way and specifically for fine dining restaurants than currently done by FAMM? In order to reach this objective, empirical findings will be used. The question whether or not relationships between management factors exist will be addressed first. If relationships are identified, the discussion will then continue by taking a closer look at these relationships.

As suggested by FAMM and other theories presented in the theoretical framework, there is a wide range of individual aspects which facilitate excellence in restaurant operations in general and/or in fine dining, if specified. However, the theory not only underlies the importance of discrete factors, but also promotes their entirety and synthesis. The latter viewpoint might be considered as a hint on the existence of relationships among different factors. Before any conclusions can be drawn, however, this assumption has to be studied in the light of empirical data.

Consequently, the empirical findings discussed under the first objective reveal that the respondents touch upon all five categories of FAMM (room, meeting, product, atmosphere, management control system). Nevertheless, only three of these aspects (meeting, product, and atmosphere) are mentioned most often. Further analysis informs that the above factors are of different intensity. In most cases the management perceives product as a fundamental factor for achieving excellence in fine dining, followed by meeting, and then atmosphere. However, the indicated intensity is not always consistent as the ranking of three main variables slightly fluctuates within the sample. Occasionally, the meeting overrides the product or the atmosphere takes over the meeting and vice versa. Such variations might be dependent on a number of contextual factors which were not the focus of this study. Therefore, in order to explain these fluctuations, further empirical studies should be done. In general, the above research outcome matches with Campbell-Smith (1967, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009) approach, which was brought up in the theoretical framework. Campbell-Smith (1967) argues that the overall meal experience relies on the three main aspects: food (known as product in the FAMM), atmosphere, and service (known as meeting in the FAMM). This leads to a conclusion that FAMM is a fairly comprehensive model, which covers a number of factors relevant to restaurant operations and the restaurant management is aware of all of these factors. In spite of this, the management tends to rely on a simplified version of FAMM and considers fewer of its aspects when pursuing excellence in fine dining. However, these factors are supplemented by other 'tools', not explicitly mentioned in FAMM, but presented by other theories. Partly mentioned under objective one, these 'tools' are knowledge, management style, type of ownership, and restaurant concept etc. Apparently, the content of the 'tool' box varies, depending on a restaurant.

As concluded above, the management is aware of FAMM perhaps without even knowing it. However, during the course of interviews it was soon discovered that the management rarely regards the FAMM aspects individually. Three of the five restaurants surveyed had a very complex and detailed concept. Subsequently the five aspects of FAMM were closely interrelated with a strong emphasis on meeting, product and atmosphere in the answers given during the interview. This strong focus and the close relationship to the day-to-day activities were also visible during the visit of the individual restaurants as part of the survey. In the restaurant focusing on organic fine dining everything had to fit to this main idea. The product was supported by staff and atmosphere. The atmosphere was very much created by the room. The owner referred to as "it is in the walls". However, attitudes and habits as well as the carefully

chosen interior had to fully support the feeling of genuine nature. The relationship between the different aspects was the strongest visible during the entire survey. However, the two other restaurants with a complex concept had similar relationships between the aspects although maybe not as intensive as perceived by the author in the first restaurant.

The strong relationship is also visible by comments made in the interviews. In most instances the aspects are paired, by saying that *"everything has to stick together"*, there has to be a *"connection of ideas".* Furthermore, the management believes that it is significant to *"sell the experience, not just food"* or *"food has to match the wine".* Such statements suggest that even though the management grants a great significance to individual aspects of the FAMM, it also considers them to be interrelated with each other. For instance, food linked up with wine and experience or all aspects linked to each other forming a unity. In other words, these findings suggest an existence of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal relationships between different FAMM aspects. In some cases there is an indication of vertical relationship within the elements of the same category, e.g. both wine and food belong to the product aspect. Yet, on other occasions, there is a horizontal relationship between separate aspects of FAMM, e.g. the room is almost never considered apart from the overall atmosphere. Finally, there are indications of diagonal relations between different elements of different categories, e.g. design, which falls under room is often linked to colors and light, which represent the aspect of atmosphere. The above mentioned three types of relationships are visualized in the amended version of FAMM (1990) and provided below. The relationships between the different sub-aspects of FAMM are only visible in 1990 version of the model. This first table of the aspects of FAMM contains a list of elements belonging to each individual aspect. It therefore makes it possible to show the relationships that owners/managers of the restaurants surveyed considered important. The graph below does not contain a specific drawing of these individual relationships. These relationships are diverse and cannot be generalized as a result of this study. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that such kind of vertical, horizontal and diagonal relationships exist. This is something that could be further defined and verified in further research.

Room	Meeting	Product	Atmosphere	Management control system
Style history	Social psychology	Theory and practical training about food and beverages, wine, beer, coffee, tea	History of ideas and cultural history	Business economy
Architectural style	Emotional theory	Meal forms training: canteen, à la carte, ceremonial meals	Communication: writing, speaking	Computer work
Textiles	Social intercourse in different cultural groups	Food and cooking, creative cooking and creation of meal events		Handling statistics
Art science		Microbiology, nutrition cooking chemistry		Work environment
Design	Practical training: interpretation of guests and satisfying their wishes	Menu planning	Choreography, body language	Marketing
	Professional meetings; backstage and front stage	Sensory analysis	Color, sounds and light	Organization of the work
	Meetings: guests–guests	The hotel and restaurant trade and their history	Floral decoration	Labour law Laws about working with alcohol

Figure 4-1: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM) from the Department of Restaurant and Culinary Arts (1990), *adapted from Gustafsson (2004)*

aspects, characterized by various types of relationships (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal) among different factors of the model. This outcome corresponds with FAMM and a few other theories which also advocate the entirety of all aspects of the meal.

However, what also became visible is that close relationships exists due to a concept of a restaurant. The concept of a restaurant sets the overall frame in which the different components interact with each other. Based on the three restaurants surveyed with a complex concept, the conclusion for this study was that, the more complex the concept of a restaurant the closer the connection between the different aspects. The only exemption is management control which is independent of the concept and meeting, which is not completely dependent on the concept only.

In addition, it is possible not only to distinguish between aspects closer related with the concept and not, it is also possible to distinguish between active and passive aspects. Active aspects are those that management can control in day-to-day activities. Meeting, product and

atmosphere are such active aspects. Management control is partly active and partly passive. Room is certainly passive because not dependent on a specific situation.

The considerations with regard to concept and active and passive aspects can be visualized better when looking at the 2004 and 2006 version of FAMM. The comments made in this regard need to be followed up in further research possibly leading to further development of FAMM. In order to highlight the ideas behind passive and active as well as concept related and none concept related aspects the following two figures are presented:

Figure 4-2: Passive and active aspects of The Five Aspect Meal Model (FAMM) *based on Gustafsson et al. (2006) and suggested by empirical findings by the authors of this thesis (2009)*

Figure 4-3: Concept related and not concept related aspects of The Five Aspect Meal Model (FAMM) *based on Gustafsson et al. (2006) and suggested by empirical findings by the authors of this thesis (2009)*

5 CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This chapter will present the concluding remarks of the entire study. This will be accomplished by first reviewing the findings of the three objectives, indicated in the beginning of the study, and then drawing the conclusions together with stating the empirical and theoretical contributions of this study.

Before offering certain conclusions in the context of the study it is necessary to go back to the beginning and to look once again at the problem description. The problem described in the beginning of the study refers to developments in the restaurant industry leading to fine dining experience. Keeping competition and differentiation in mind the meaning of the concept of excellence was questioned. In addition, the role of management in this context was also considered.

The theoretical framework suggested that there is a relationship between all three terms – fine dining, excellence and management of restaurants. Especially, when the management function and responsibility in creating excellent fine dining experiences is concerned the theoretical framework suggests referring to FAMM. In order to find out if theoretical considerations meet approaches by practitioners in reality a number of interviews following an iterative methodology were conducted in five restaurants in the countryside of Skåne. In addition, the general objective of describing the above mentioned relationship between the three concepts excellence, fine dining and management was further specified to three purposes of the study. These purposes relate to factors to be considered by management when creating excellent fine dining experiences, investigating if deficits exists between management intentions and staff actions in the implementation of a concept to create excellent fine dining experiences and finally, to find out if relationships/priorities exist when aspects are determined by management in creating excellent fine dining experiences. The findings were discussed in detail in the relevant parts in the study.

In summary, the conclusions offered by the thesis refer to empirical and theoretical contributions related to the three objectives. Before the conclusions are offered and statements regarding contributions are made for the sake of better understanding the findings which form the basis of the conclusions are once again briefly summarized. The conclusions will be presented afterwards followed by the empirical and theoretical contributions.

5.1 Summarized conclusions

First objective:

(1) As far as fine dining and excellence is concerned it has to be considered that the interviewees were not familiar with academic concepts related to these terms. However, the information provided by the interviews allows for the conclusion that the ideas behind the concepts were applied in all restaurants surveyed. Insofar one could refer to a concept of an adapted fine dining experience in the context of the countryside of Skåne.

(2) In the interviews sufficient information was provided about the five aspects in FAMM that allows for the conclusion that the model as such is valid and of relevance to the restaurants surveyed. In addition, based on the information provided, it seems to be possible to furthermore characterize the five aspects in different ways. Three aspects are considered in all detail when daily management routine is concerned – meeting, product and atmosphere. Therefore these aspects can be considered as active. In contrast the aspect room is important, but does not require involvement of management on a daily basis. It can therefore be considered as passive. This aspect is, however, very important when the relationship to the concept of the restaurant is concerned. When focusing on the concept of the restaurant it is possible to distinguish not only between active and passive aspects, but also between concept dependent and less dependent aspects. Meeting and management control are less dependent aspects. Room, product and atmosphere have a dependent relationship to the concept. Management control, in addition, is a complex aspect involving active (direct involvement in the restaurant) and passive (administration) tasks. If confirmed in other studies, this could lead to further developments of FAMM.

Second objective:

(1) The staff members more or less offered information and insights similar to the answers provided by the management. The staff members focused in their answer on the aspects that they were involved most – e.g., front-line personnel on meeting and atmosphere, kitchen personnel on product. Less detailed than management they were able to explain the basic concepts in the restaurant and could even defend the ideas involved in their individual aspects. One explanation for the identical views and explanations could be that in order to create excellent fine dining experiences staff members have to be part of this mission. All restaurants surveyed exist for quite a while and are leading culinary

places for a number of years. One restaurant owner had pointed out that the personnel employed in the restaurant do not fluctuate. Personnel interaction between management and staff as well as and continuity is an important factor. This aspect, however, is not really included in FAMM.

Third objective:

(1) In general, the above research outcome matches with Campbell-Smith (1967, cited by Jang and Namkung, 2009) approach, which was brought up in the theoretical framework. Campbell-Smith (1967) argues that the overall meal experience relies on the three main aspects: food (known as product in the FAMM), atmosphere, and service (known as meeting in the FAMM). This leads to a conclusion that the FAMM is a fairly comprehensive model, which covers a number of factors relevant to restaurant operations and the restaurant management is aware of all of these factors. In spite of this, the management tends to rely on a simplified version of the FAMM model and consider fewer of its aspects when pursuing excellence in fine dining. However, these factors are supplemented by other 'tools', not explicitly mentioned in the FAMM, but presented by other theories. As mentioned under objective one, these 'tools' are knowledge, management style, type of ownership, and restaurant concept. Apparently, the content of the 'tool' box varies, depending on a restaurant. Even though the management grants a great significance to individual aspects of the FAMM, it also considers them to be interrelated with each other. For instance, food linked up with wine and experience or all aspects linked to each other forming a unity. In other words, these findings suggest an existence of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal relationships between different FAMM aspects. Thus, such findings guide to conclusion that the management practices a synthesis of aspects, characterized by various types of relationships (vertical, horizontal, diagonal) among different factors of the model. This outcome corresponds with the FAMM and a few other theories which also advocate the entirety of all aspects of the meal.

Based on the above shown objectives of the study the following conclusions can be drawn and statements regarding to the scientific contribution of this study will be made accordingly.

5.2 Empirical conclusions and contributions

As far as the empirical conclusions and contributions are concerned the following statements can be made.

(1) The interviews conducted in English with interviewees without a specific academic restaurant background and not being English native speakers confirmed that general considerations involved in academic discussions about the concept of excellence, fine dining experiences as well as the combined concept of excellent fine dining experiences as introduced in this study is followed intentionally or unintentionally by the interviewees.

(2) The specific aspects of FAMM were also clearly identified in the interviews.

(3) The answers provided in the interviews show a high degree of similarity also when different methods are used for the investigation of the different concepts and aspects involved.

These empirical findings allow for suggesting that some owners/managers realized the potential resulting from having and implementing a comprehensive concept which functions as the general framework for any kind of activity creating the aspects which are considered as important by the owners/managers for serving excellent fine dining experiences. In addition this may help to eliminate negative influences from more uncontrollable and external aspects, e.g., customers' mood.

5.3 Theoretical conclusions and contributions

(1) The theoretical considerations related to the concepts of excellence, fine dining and the function of management in this respect were relevant to the restaurants surveyed within this study.

(2) The interviews indicated that academic concepts of fine dining etc. can be misunderstood. However, if looking at general indicators and factors to be observed when the three concepts which were the focus of this study it can be concluded that the academic concepts reflect practical considerations. Therefore the restaurants surveyed have implemented a concept of applied fine dining in the context of a restaurant situated in the countryside of Skåne. However, these concepts are in line with the academic discussions.

(3) The information provided during the interviews allows for suggestions regarding further research and further developments of FAMM.

The theoretical conclusions allow for adapting the last version of FAMM (Gustafsson, 2006) by adding a sixth aspect. This aspect is the concept of a restaurants which should be considered the core of each restaurant as it function as the general base for any activity. This is indicated in the model below.

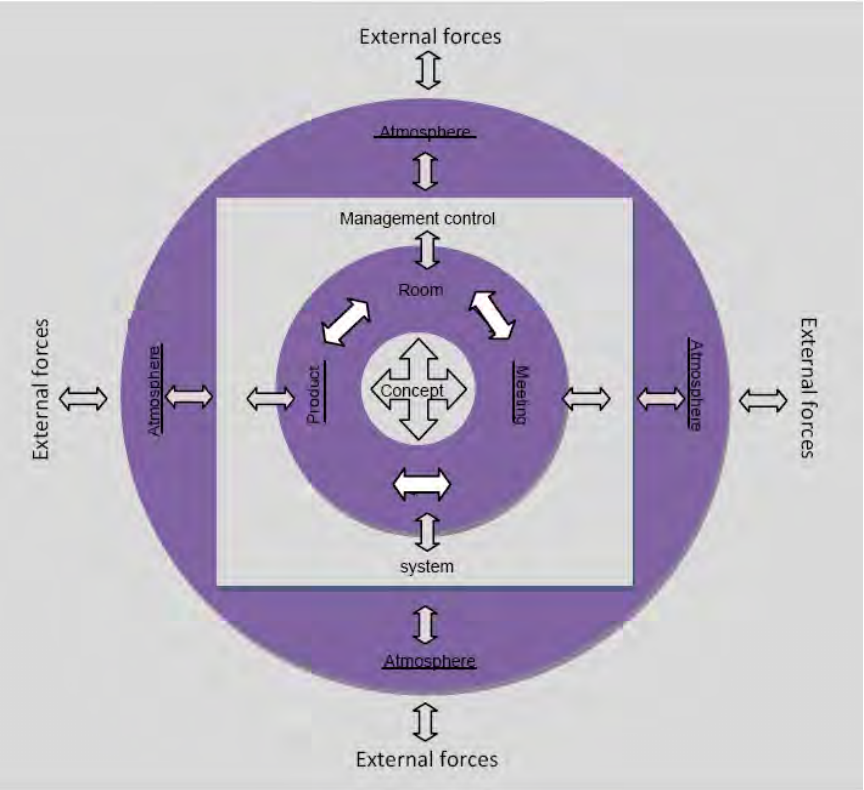

Figure 5-1: The Five Aspects Meal Model (FAMM), adapted from Gustafsson et al. (2006) and enhanced by empirical findings of the authors of this thesis (2009)

6 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter will begin by outlining several limitations of the study. Then some implications for further research will be suggested.

6.1 Limitations

The restaurant industry and its continuous development is, among others, heavily influenced by a number of external forces, e.g., customers, changes in the economy, political and legal aspects, technology levels, structural changes, transformation of society, culture, values, needs, and wants (Persson and Kent, 2001). It is very difficult to work within such a complex set of topics in a study with a very limited period of time available to produce such a study. Therefore concentration on some of the relevant aspects is necessary. In the introduction the question was raised what options managers have to successfully compete with their restaurants and attract a sufficient number of customers. Therefore this master thesis focuses on the internal elements of restaurants according to FAMM (room, product, meeting, atmosphere and management control system) only as these aspects are considered to be relevant once for compete successfully. The focus in investigating the FAMM aspects was put especially on the management perspective.

In order to reach conclusions within the limited scope of this study comparable restaurants had to be chosen for the investigation. Therefore it was decided to focus on fine dining restaurants in the countryside of Skåne only. Restaurants located in the cities of Skåne had to be excluded because of the assumption that the rural situation would influence any restaurant in a different way compared to a restaurant in a city. One example of the different situation is, e.g., that in city customers can spontaneously walk into a restaurant when passing by. This is certainly different from the situation of a restaurant in the countryside.

The research and empirical findings are based on a limited number of interviews conducted with the restaurant owners/managers and randomly selected front-line and kitchen personnel. In two restaurants it was not possible to interview the staff members. Unfortunately, despite intensive efforts to have more interviews in other restaurants not more than the above mentioned five locations were willing to provide insight on their management style. Although this is

understandable from a personal point of view it means that the small sample size limits the applicability of the findings to the wide range of the restaurant industry.

All interviews were conducted in English. None of the survey participants was an English native speaker. In some cases this has caused difficulties in depth and clarity of answers provided. Other limits in the information provided result from the willingness of management personnel to share core and maybe confidential parts of their management philosophy.

Nevertheless, these are typical limitations when carrying out qualitative (and partly quantitative) investigations on sensitive issues like personal management style. The challenge for every study will therefore always be to find a sufficient number of restaurant owners/managers to share their views in all depth and detail.

6.2 Further research

This study mainly focused on the managerial side of excellent fine dining with a special application in restaurants located in the countryside of Skåne. The findings revealed a concept of applied fine dining implemented in those restaurants surveyed. In addition, valuable insights were gained regarding FAMM as a result of the interviews with management personnel. Given these results and given the above mentioned limitations a few suggestions can be made for further research. This thesis can serve as a basis for the next level of an exploration of the same concept.

This study focused on restaurants located in the countryside of Skåne using a qualitative approach based on interviews. One of the recommendations is to expand the entire study by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This may help to find out more about the statistical significance of FAMM aspects as they are considered by management in creating excellence in fine dining on a larger scale. Specific suggestions made could be to add numerical values in terms of importance of aspects and subcategories within the aspects of FAMM. The use of the document study was very valuable as a mechanism to verify the consistency of information provided during the interview. Therefore, document studies could also be used and maybe expanded in future. Conducting more interviews with staff members, such as front line and kitchen personnel, should focus on their opinions how they add to excellent fine dining experiences and how this is influenced by the management framework within the restaurant.

Since this study resulted in some ideas about the concept of applied fine dining it is necessary to repeat a similar study with restaurants located in urban areas. Based on the conducted interviews and information gathered, fine dining was described within the context of restaurants in the countryside of Skåne which seem to be different from concepts of fine dining restaurants in cities. It might be necessary to differentiate in the investigations of restaurants situated in smaller towns and larger cities (for Sweden this would mean to concentrate on Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö only). The findings may allow for a further generalization of aspects considered when applied fine dining is achieved even though this might be different for each restaurant when specific matures to achieve excellent fine dining are considered.

For the analysis part of this study, FAMM was used to discuss the empirical findings of this investigation. New insights were identified regarding the model, showing relationships and dependencies between the aspects. In order to generalize the findings related to the inclusion of the factor concept or to distinguish between active and passive aspects when management control is considered further research needs to be carried out in order to allow for a generalization of the findings of this study.

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Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Interview questions

General

1. Could you introduce yourself and indicate your position in the restaurant?
2. How long have been working in the hospitality industry?
3. Do you have hospitality related education? If yes, please specify.
4. How long has this restaurant been operating?
5. What comes to your mind when you think about fine dining? Please, use keywords or drawings to visualize that on the paper. Could you explain why did you choose these keywords/drawings and what do they mean? *
   (What do you think about excellence in fine dining?) **
   (How would you explain excellence?) **
6. Could you give us some examples of your daily tasks in the restaurant?
7. What is the size of the restaurant staff? *
8. How many table seats do you have in the restaurant?
9. How many people can you serve at the same time?
10. Do your serve lunch and/or dinner?
11. Do you have different menus for lunch and for dinner? If so, what is the reason behind?
12. Would you categorize this restaurant as a fine dining restaurant?
13. What makes it a fine dining restaurant?
14. Who are your target group/groups? How do you adapt to it/them?
15. What do you know about your customers in general?
16. Are your customers' mainly Swedish urban residents or tourists? If tourists, then from which countries?
17. Do you have a guestbook?
18. Is your restaurant rated? (White Guide, etc.) *

19. Do you belong to any restaurant organization or association? *
20. Who are your competitors? (other restaurants, food producers, distributors, etc.) How do you compete with them? *

Specific

Room

21. Could you tell us what the considerations were regarding the restaurant facilities?
    - ☐ location
    - ☐ number of people to be seated
    - ☐ a relationship between a room arrangement and the philosophy of the restaurant
    - ☐ restaurant environment
    - ☐ interior design
    - ☐ atmospherics (visual, aural, tactile, olfactory)
    - ☐ other _____
22. What makes the restaurant facilities to be the most suitable for the restaurant business?
23. What do the restaurant customers find remarkable about your restaurant facilities?
24. How do you verify that your ideas meet customer expectations? *

Meeting

25. Which standards do the personnel have to follow when serving the restaurant guests? *
    - ☐ prior to meeting the customer
    - ☐ skills and education
    - ☐ attitudes and behaviors
    - ☐ meeting the customer
    - ☐ showing the table
    - ☐ friendliness
    - ☐ quick service
    - ☐ knowing the menu
    - ☐ small talk with the customer
    - ☐ recognizing loyal customers
    - ☐ focusing on individual or group customers
    - ☐ the likelihood of return
    - ☐ how quickly a meal can be cooked
    - ☐ esthetic appeal of dishes
    - ☐ creativity in cooking

☐ other _____

Which standards do you have to follow when serving the restaurant guests? ***

26. What do you do if they don't meet these standards and your expectations? *

☐ confrontation

☐ education and training

☐ firing

☐ recruiting new staff

27. What makes restaurant personnel competent?

28. What are some of the pleasant surprises the restaurant guests encounter when interacting with the personnel?

Product

29. Can you tell us what your considerations were when the menu was created? *

☐ special ingredients

☐ food decorations

☐ special recipes

☐ story telling

☐ traditional, modern or always changing menu

☐ different menus for lunch and for dinner

☐ creative meal names

☐ wine list

☐ price strategy

☐ revenue management

Do you know how the menu was created? ***

30. What helps the restaurant to deliver the menu items to the restaurant guests in an efficient manner?

31. What do the restaurant guests find unique about the restaurant menu?

32. How do you verify that the menu meets your customer expectations? *

Atmosphere

33. What makes the restaurant atmosphere the best for this type of restaurant?

☐ music (type, volume, tempo)

☐ smell (consciously adapted)

☐ decorations (flowers, candles, pictures)

☐ effect of atmosphere on staff

34. How do you guarantee a successful atmosphere? *

35. What do customers notice and compliment regarding the restaurant atmosphere?

Management Control System

36. How would you describe the working environment in the restaurant?
    - ☐ good organizational culture
    - ☐ trust
37. How do you achieve management effectiveness? *
38. How do you support your personnel? *

    How is the management supporting you? ***
39. Which management aspects are exclusive for this restaurant? Are customers aware of them and if so, what fascinates them the most? *

    Are customers aware of some of the management aspects characteristic of this restaurant and what fascinates them the most? ***
40. How complaints and special requests are handled in your restaurant?

Final

41. What do you do to secure a successful restaurant day?
    - ☐ well organized staff (part-time or full-time)
    - ☐ division of work among staff members
    - ☐ extra personnel (when and how many)
    - ☐ employee motivation (bonuses, special trainings)
    - ☐ proportion of freedom and supervision of staff members
42. Using the pictures in front of you please arrange an excellent dining experience. Could you explain why did you choose these pictures? *

Is there anything you would like to add? Any other important aspects for the excellence of dining not mentioned yet?

* All questions in grey should be asked the management only

** All the questions in parentheses should be asked only if the respondent did not answer them with the previous question

*** All the questions in green should be asked front line and kitchen personnel only

Appendix 2 – Research Ethics Protocol

LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Research Ethics Protocol

We (Annika Hinrichs, Marta Slodnik, and Ruta Idzeliene) are International Marketing and Brand Management master students at Lund University School of Economics and Management, Sweden. It is our great pleasure and responsibility to conduct a research project concerning fine dining restaurants in the countryside of Southern Sweden. This study is supervised by the professor Magnus Lagnevik, Lund University School of Economics and Management.

We would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. Just before we start the interview, we would like to reassure you that your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and you are free to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time.

The content of this interview will be made available to members of the research team, i.e. to us, our supervisor, other professors involved in the grading of the project, and library users of Lund University School of Economics and Management. Excerpts of this interview may also be made part of the final research report.

We would be grateful if you would sign this form to confirm that you agree with its contents.

_____

(first name, last name)

_____

(signature)

_____

(date)

Should you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact us: Annika Hinrichs (040-46-5985 or 076-240-6861; annika.hinrichs@hotmail.com), Marta Slodnik (706-557-1202; marta.slodnik@gmail.com), Ruta Idzeliene (076-849-0645; ruta@lkb.lt).

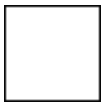
Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 3 – Observation document – FAMM, adapted from Gustafsson (2004)

Room	Meeting	Product	Atmosphere	Management control system
Style history	Social psychology	Theory and practical training about food and beverages, wine, beer, coffee, tea	History of ideas and cultural history	Business economy
Architectural style	Emotional theory	Meal forms training: canteen, à la carte, ceremonial meals	Communication: writing, speaking	Computer work
Textiles	Social intercourse in different cultural groups	Food and cooking, creative cooking and creation of meal events		Handling statistics
Art science		Microbiology, nutrition cooking chemistry		Work environment
Design	Practical training: interpretation of guests and satisfying their wishes	Menu planning	Choreography, body language	Marketing
	Professional meetings; backstage and front stage	Sensory analysis	Color, sounds and light	Organization of the work
	Meetings: guests–guests	The hotel and restaurant trade and their history	Floral decoration	Labour law Laws about working with alcohol

Appendix 4 – White Guide Restaurant Classification

INTERNATIONAL MASTERCLASS



Ranked according to food rating.
Number in 2008: 6.
Points criteria: 80 points, of which at least 32 for food.
Description: Restaurants where the kitchen achieves outstanding and original cooking in the international masterclass category. The overall experience is on a very high level.

SWEDISH MASTERCLASS

Ranked according to food rating.
Number in 2008: 21.
Points criteria: 75 points, of which at least 29 for food.
Description: Restaurants where the kitchen achieves very interesting cooking in the Swedish masterclass category. The overall experience is on a very high level.

VERY GOOD CLASS

Ranked according to the overall rating.
Number in 2008: 59.
Points criteria: 67 points, of which at least 25 for food.
Description: A very good overall experience in which the kitchen achieves interesting and very well executed cooking.

GOOD CLASS

Ranked according to the overall rating.
Number in 2008: 106
Points criteria: 60 points, of which at least 20 for food.
Description: A pleasant overall experience in which the kitchen achieves well executed cooking.

A NICE PLACE

Not rated on points
Description: A restaurant with much to recommend it, even if it doesn't quite live up to the requirements for a points-rated classification.

A SUGGESTION

Not rated on points.
Description: There's always something here that makes a visit worthwhile; or the best option in the area.

Appendix 5 – Full set of pictures for the document study (photo elicitation)

Appendix 6 – Summary of Ängavallen

Ängavallen
SE-23591 Vellinge
TEL: +46 (0)40-42 32 50
FAX: +46 (0)40-42 32 61
E-Mail: angavallen@angavallen.se
WEBSITE: www.angavallen.se

General Manager: Rolf Axel Nordström
Restaurant Manager: Gabriela Jonsson
Restaurant Founded: 1998
Restaurant staff: 8
Lunch/ Dinner: Yes/ Yes
Rated by: White Guide, Sveriges Bästa Bord
Organizations: Coutryside Hotels, Culinary Skåne
Logo: "Ängavallen" is a name of the restaurant; "The pig" was the first animal on the farm and "Kulinariskt + ekologiskt" state for culinary and serving 100% ecological food

Ekologiskt av hög kvalitet i lantlig miljö
"In the northen Europe there are just two completely organic restaurants, but Ängavallen is so much more. Everything is organic, including the well – filled wine cellar. We can especially recommend the lunch."– White Guide

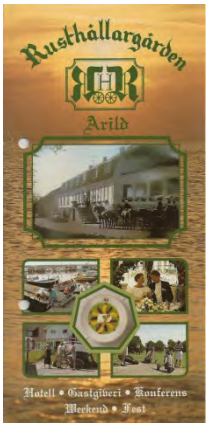
120

Unique: Charming architecture
"Breathe in the scent of fresh herbs from the garden, and enjoy them later in the restaurant. Uniquely at Ängavallen, everything in the restaurant and shop is 100% organic, with most of the goods coming from the state itself. From these fantastic ingredients our chefs create menus that have earned us the White Guide's award Organic Restaurant Of The Year 2008. Come and visit, you'll soon see why. Want to make the most of your visit? We warmly recommend our prize – winning estate hotel." – Countryside Hotel

"When you sit down to a meal at Ängavallens Gård, you can be confident that you are eating the finest food prepared using the finest ingredients. High culinary standards are guaranteed by Peter J. Skogström, Chef of the Year 2006, who will be with us as culinary director throughout 2008. The award-winning ingredients come from our own farm. Spices and vegetables are grown in our kitchen garden, while the meat is from our own livestock, reared under the best possible natural conditions. Welcome to Ängavallens Gård - an organic business from farm to table." – Culinary Skåne

Appendix 7 – Summary of Rusthållargården

Rusthållargården
Utsikten 1, SE-26043 Arlid
TEL: +46 (0)42-34 65 30
FAX: +46 (0)42-34 67 93
E-Mail: reception@rusthallargarden.se
WEBSITE: www.rusthallargarden.se



General Manager: Jonas Nilsson
Restaurant Manager: Michael Lundbäck
Restaurant Founded: 1675
Restaurant staff: 10-12
Lunch/ Dinner: Yes/ Yes
Rated by: White Guide, Sveriges Bästa Bord
Organizations: Coutryside Hotels, Culinary Skåne
Logo: "Arlid" is the name of the village, where the restaurant is located; "Rusthållargården" is the name is a place providing rest for horses and armor; "H with two wheels" symbolizes old wagon and Fork, knife and plate symbolizes place when the knights could get meal

Familjär gästgivartradition
"The romantic guesthouse captivates you with its charm. The kitchen performs to a high standard. For the traveler there's a menu with Skansk 'kuskaspis' all afternoon. Wine list with a Fresh bias." – White Guide

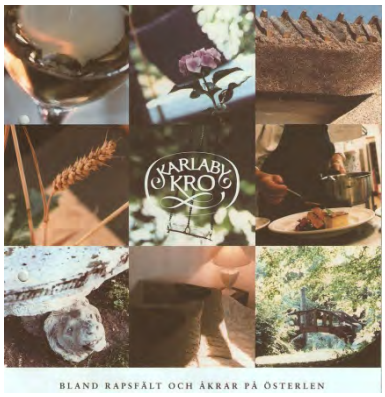
140

Tradition: Inns and hostelries
"With its authentic, friendly atmosphere, and its fantastic restaurant, Rusthållargården has been renowned for generations as a meeting place for food lovers from near and far. A stay in Rusthållargården's cozy and comfortable surroundings is as charming in the winter as it is in the summer. Come to us for quiet, romantic weekend, a unique conference, or an active holiday for the entire family. There's also accommodation in the lake cottages and captain's villa" – Countryside Hotels

"An oasis on the west coast of Skåne, Arild is a charming fishing village with narrow streets and picturesque houses, where Rusthållargården has become the place to eat for those who appreciate good food in relaxed surroundings. Here the catch of the day is still taken fresh from the boats, and new primeur vegetables are readily available on the Kullen peninsula. The cuisine is genuine Skåne, with occasional leanings towards France - the friendly atmosphere is Skåne through and through. And Arild, with its beautiful natural surroundings, has something to offer everyone." – Culinary Skåne

Appendix 8 – Summary of Karlaby Kro

Karlaby Kro
Karlaby, SE-27293 Tommarp
TEL: +46 (0)414-203 00
FAX: Fax: +46 (0)414-204 73
E-Mail: reception@karlabykro.se
WEBSITE: www.karlabykro.se



General Manager: Pär Bonér
Restaurant Manager: Ingegerd Ferlinger
Restaurant Founded: 1990
Restaurant staff: 4-5
Lunch/ Dinner: No/ Yes
Rated by: White Guide, Sveriges Bästa Bord
Organizations: Coutryside Hotels, Culinary Skåne, Luxury Lifestyle
Logo: "Karlaby" is the name of the village where the restaurant is located and "Kro" is a Danish word for restaurant

Matromantik i lantidyll
"The kitchen delivers an inspired mix of Skånes local produce and Mediterranean influences. Finding a suitable wine to the food presents no difficulty whatsoever." – White Guide

60

Unique: Charming architecture
"In the picturesque Skåne village of Österlen, Karlaby Kro stands in its own parkland, amid fields and farmland. Here you'll find sensational food – Mediterranean – influenced dishes made from fresh, local produce – and a perfect spot to rest and relax. We've a fantastic pool area, where light streams in though the glass ceiling. In the summer, we've seating on the terrace and hammocks in the pergola. Our first – rate service providers that little extra that makes your stay truly special." – Countryside Hotels

"Amid the rape fields and lush pastures of Österlen lies the charming hotel, restaurant and spa that is Karlaby Kro. The establishment is built around a courtyard and has whitewashed walls and thatched roofs. The kitchen is inspired by Skåne, Denmark and the Mediterranean. The seasonal menu varies according to what the local producers have to offer. Karlaby provides a total experience: good food, accommodation and a relaxing spa. An experience that's well worth the journey." – Culinary Skåne

Appendix 9 – Summary of Idala Gård

Idala Gård
SE 231 91 Trelleborg
TEL: +46 (0)41-33 13 13
FAX: +46 (0)41-33 14 15
E-Mail: info@idalagard.se
WEBSITE: www.idalagard.se

General Manager: Hans Nyman
Restaurant Manager:
Restaurant Founded: 2004
Restaurant staff: 2
Lunch/ Dinner: Yes/ Yes
Rated by: White Guide
Organizations:
Logo: The name "Idala" comes from the names of previous owners of the farm: Ida and Lars and "Med En Doft Av Italien" means with a taste of Italy

Italien mitt på skånska slätten
"Mitt ute på Söderslätt ligger en utmärkt italiensk restaurang med schweizisk köksmästare, inhyst i en varsamt renoverad och idylliskt belägen Skånegård. Ett perfekt utflyktsmål för större sällskap ell... "– White Guide

60

"Come and share our beautiful environment, with the sea and nature close at hand. For you golfers, some of the best courses in Southern Sweden are within ½-hour's drive! Take "time-out" for some relaxation and reflection, or why not let us arrange your next work conference?
Experience the delicious food, exciting wines and the comfortable accommodation while discovering local places of interest. At Idala Farm we combine genuine hospitality with a touch of Italy." – idalagard.se

A stay at Idala Farm is a peaceful, yet satisfying experience for all the senses. The Guest House reception is over the cobble-stoned courtyard. Once there, you will soon discover a pleasant atmosphere where Mediterranean charm and local Scanian hospitality meet.
Idala Farm is the perfect setting for your special occasion. No function is too big or too small for us. The relaxing and pleasant atmosphere in a tasteful Mediterranean style is just as suitable for a family get-together as for a big wedding reception." – idalagard.se

Appendix 10 – Summary of Klitterhus

Klitterhus
Havsbaden, SE 262 63 Engelholm
TEL: +46 (0)43-11 35 30
FAX: +46 (0)43-11 35 31
E-Mail: info@klitterhus.com
WEBSITE: www.klitterhus.com

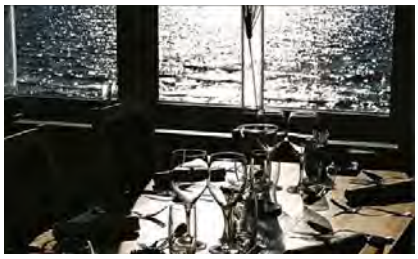
General Manager:
Restaurant Manager: Linda Ehrnsten
Restaurant Founded: 2004
Restaurant staff: 4
Lunch/ Dinner: Yes/ Yes
Rated by: White Guide, Sveriges Bästa Krogar
Organizations:
Logo:"Klitterhus" is the name of the restaurant; shape of the restaurant and waves symbolize the closeness to the sea and beach location

"A small pearl offering a fantastic view overlooking Skäldervikens beach. A lunch during summer on their tremendous open patio is a highlight but coming here even at any other season is always worth the trip. The design of the restaurant is modern through using bright wood..."– White Guide

110

"Klitterhus is a restaurant and hotel with long traditions. 1930/40 Klitterhus used to be place offering recreation at the sea combined with food, intertainment through artists, conserts and different kindof live music The building was constructed like an eight angular pavilion which until today is part of Klitterhus' special character." – klitterhus.com

"Klitterhus is offering a small but very surprising vine list accompanying the meals which are credenced for visual as well as delicacy experiences. Starters are wellcomposed and main courses are charcterised by athestic and tastefull preparation embedded in a natrual atmosphere..." – klitterhus.com



Appendix 11 – Restaurant 1 (document study: personal document)

basics

Alcohols without extra decorations

welcome

originality

DO NOT OVER DO IT

nice surroundings

Matching drinks for meals

Skilled personell

natural materials

Appendix 12 – Restaurant 2 (document study: personal document)

Appendix 13 – Restaurant 3 (document study: personal document)

MATHIAS.

GRAND HOTEL

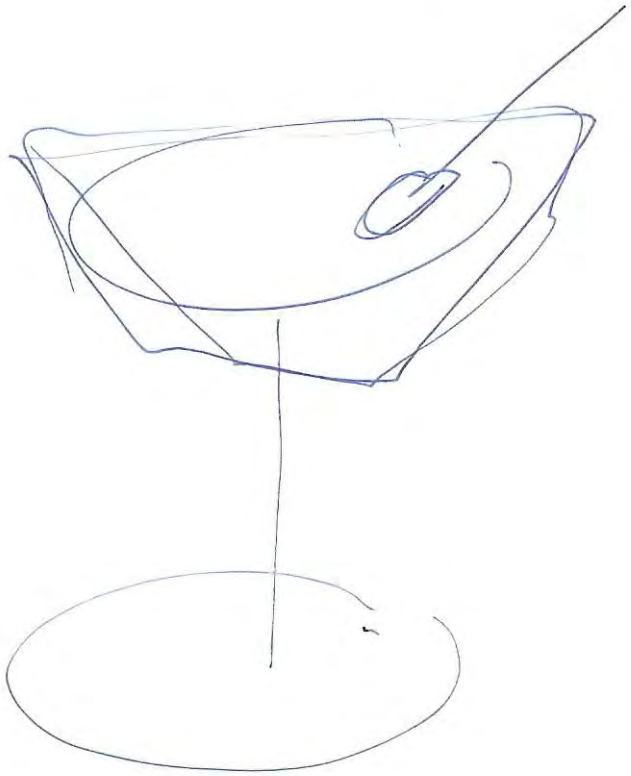
SNOBBIGT

DÅLIG

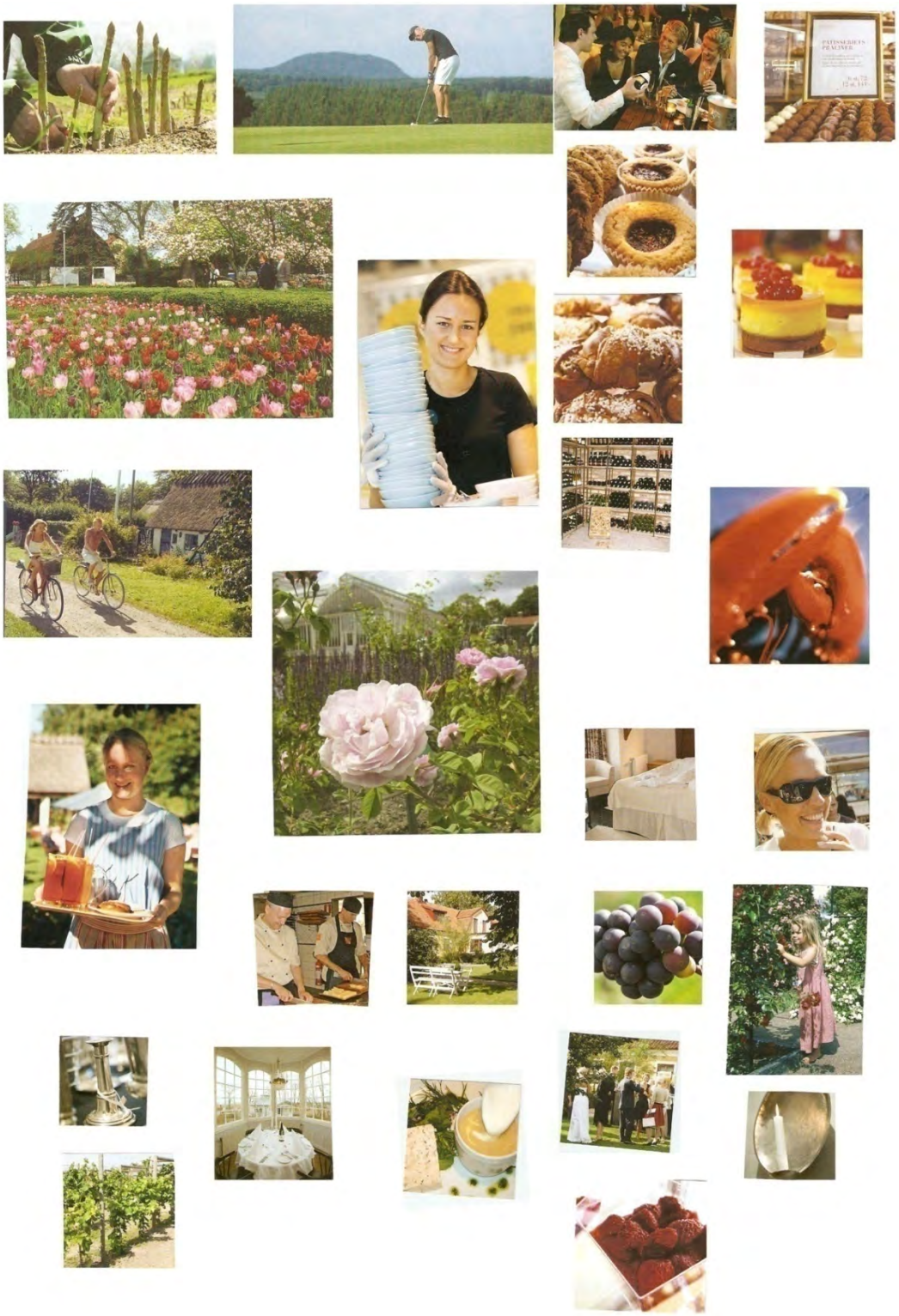
INGEN / EKONOMI

VALUTA FÖR PENGARNA

Appendix 14 – Restaurant 4 (document study: personal document)

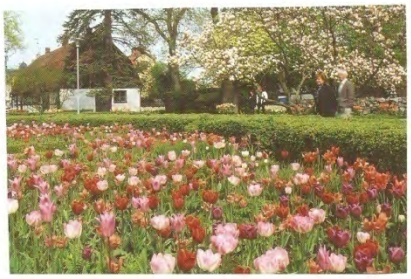


Appendix 15 – Restaurant 1 (document study: photo elicitation)



Appendix 16 – Restaurant 2 (document study: photo elicitation)

Appendix 17 – Restaurant 3 (document study: photo elicitation)



Appendix 18 – Restaurant 4 (document study: photo elicitation)

Appendix 19 – Restaurant 5 (document study: photo elicitation)