Strategic Marketing of Traditional Turkish Gastronomy in the Netherlands

Master Graduation Project by Yusuf Bayraktaroglu

Chaired by Annemiek van Boeijen & Mentored by Tobias Hebbink

Preface

This report is written for the final project of the master program in Strategic Product Design, housed in the Industrial Design Engineering faculty of Delft University of Technology. The report, entitled "Strategic Marketing of Traditional Turkish Gastronomy in the Netherlands," aims to highlight the importance of culture-sensitive design in marketing, branding, and commercialization. It also aims to develop a strong user-centered brand for a new startup in the fast-food industry in the Netherlands and create formulas to foster the integration of 'Dutch citizens with a conservative subculture of Turkish background' into Dutch culture. The project brief can be found in appendix B.

This text presents research findings related to the Turkish fast-food restaurant sector in the Netherlands. The study found that Turkish fast-food restaurants in Den Haag have a strong Islamic identity. Conflicting values between dominant Islamic culture and secular Dutch culture, such as alcohol intolerance and gender discrimination, make integration challenging. The author suggests that designers can play a role in achieving integration by creating representations that exist in the intersection of secular Turkish culture and Dutch culture. Additionally, the study indicates untapped demand for more diverse and innovative fast-food offerings in the Netherlands. The research concludes with a decision to continue marketing the traditional Turkish recipe "Midye Dolma" in the Dutch market, based on its high nutritional value, health benefits, and strategic fit. In the design phase, a user-centered brand is developed. The branding is enhanced by a strategic launch campaign, delivering a prominent message of 'come, whoever you are' to effectively communicate the brand's dedication to promoting integration.

Throughout the project and reporting, AI is utilized in various stages, encompassing writing support from Chat GPT and the generation of base images through Midjourney AI. The entire report is thoroughly examined and refined by Chat GPT to convey the messages of the project clearly. The captions of the figures explicitly indicate the base images generated using Midjourney AI.

Summary

Given the prevailing global tensions and controversial development of artificial intelligence, as well as the strategic significance of branding in design, the importance of culture cannot be understated. In this report, we identify five key cultures: traditional Dutch culture (1), international Dutch culture (2), the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens (3), conservative Islamic Turkish culture (4), and secular Turkish culture (5). Our thesis proposes that establishing a brand that deeply connects with culture 5 can enhance culture 2 by subduing culture 3 and mitigating the supporting effect (referred to as the "long arm") of culture 4 on culture 3. This claim is backed by state-of-the-art research on integration theory, suggesting that designers can contribute to fundamental integration by creating brands and representations that exist at the intersection of secular Turkish culture (5) and international Dutch culture (2). This approach paves the way for integration, enabling individuals to preserve their heritage while fostering a connection with Dutch culture and values. We argue that meticulously designed representations have the potential to facilitate successful integration, while alleviating segregation and marginalization.

The prominence of target culture 3 becomes evident in the fast-food sector in Den Haag. As a result, the project commences with contextual research on Turkish fast-food restaurants in Den Haag, exploring multiple aspects such as production, identity, representation, regulation, and consumption. Our findings reveal that many establishments emphasize their conservative Muslim identities. However, the study also highlights that these restaurants often neglect marketing and overall restaurant conditions, potentially undermining their brand equity. In addition to contextual research, we conducted demand research to understand the expectations of international Dutch culture (2) from the fast-food market. This research reveals that a significant number of individuals regularly consume fast-food, particularly during social gatherings or evenings out. Concerns are raised about the health aspects of fast-food, with many expressing a preference for greater variety and healthier choices. Based on the contextual research, demand research, and an examination of traditional Turkish gastronomy, we determine that 'Midye Dolma' is well-suited for branding in the Dutch market.

Positioned in the nutritious drink companion market based on demand research findings, the brand aims to address a market gap and effectively target culture 2. Additionally, it seeks to highlight the brand's traditional Turkish roots to make an impact on culture 3. The brand's purpose is defined with the objective of fostering better integration, accompanied by a brand personality described as delicious, sustainable, and wholesome. After the brand is created, we plan a launch campaign centered around the key message of 'come whoever you are.' This message not only addresses integration, inclusion, and diversity, but also showcases the brand's versatility by appealing to individuals seeking taste, a delicious drink companion, environmental friendliness, cruelty-free options, and highly nutritious food. The extensive cultural work invested in the brand's development prior to and during the project positions it to become an iconic representation with significant potential.

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    0.   Introduction

In the contemporary world, the importance of cultural studies has risen significantly, owing to the effects of globalization, digitalization, and rapid transportation, among other factors that have fostered a sense of global unity (Van Boeijen, 2020; Kimmelman, 2019; UNESCO, 2002). This cultural homogenization has been accelerated with the rise of recent technologies, such as the internet and social media (Pagel, 2014). While this cultural convergence has led to the trivialization of some local cultural messages, it has also united the world around universal values such as freedom, equality, personal dignity, pluralism, and human rights (Brooks, 2022; Koval, 2008). Local cultures that are less familiar to international audiences have become an increasingly significant value, with the potential to be a common heritage of today's united world, but not without the risk of extinction.

Independent of this, there is another distinct development that highlights the emerging importance of cultural studies, supporting the rationale for conducting a culture-sensitive study in the field of strategic design. Concurrently, we are witnessing a new era of diverse creativity driven by artificial intelligence (AI). The advancement of AI technologies is profoundly influenced by cultural factors, values, and beliefs, which significantly shape its development (Reese, 2019; Chui, Manyika, & Miremadi, 2018; Henderson, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2019). Cultural factors also play a pivotal role in propelling innovation and nurturing creativity within AI development (Kim, 2019; PwC, 2019; Parker, 2019).

<u>Considering the combined impact of cultural convergence and the significance of culture in AI development, it becomes evident that culture will emerge as a prominent subject of academic research in this new era.</u>

Culture exerts a pervasive influence on diverse aspects of our lives, such as education, media, city planning, human rights, army, art, fashion, and more. The significance of culture has only grown in recent years, making it crucial to identify its intriguing dimensions. For instance, certain cultures that have not yet been widely adopted possess untapped potential in various domains. Moreover, the convergence of diverse cultures is generating novel cultural values. Achieving successful adaptation, acculturation, and bicultural identity can be a daunting task, but several perspectives emphasize the importance of preserving one's own cultural identity while integrating into a new culture (Ward & Chang, 2017; Sam & Berry, 2010; Berry, 2003). These authors contend that effective acculturation necessitates a balance between cultural maintenance and adaptation, yielding positive outcomes for individuals and society. To this end, considering acculturation in a broader socio-cultural context, as influenced by both immigrant and host cultural orientations, is critical (Brown & Noels, 2014; Padilla & Medina, 1996). Notably, the theories of cultural integration become even more compelling in the presence of conflicting elements (such as religious beliefs, traditions, and societal norms) among cultures, which demand ethical and strategic design around universal values.

Food and culture are intricately intertwined, with food serving as a medium through which cultural traditions, values, and identities are expressed and maintained. As De Garine and de Garine-Wichatitsky (1997) note, food plays a critical role in preserving cultural heritage, as it is often imbued with symbolic meanings and cultural significance that are passed down from one generation to the next. O'Neill and O'Driscoll (2015) further assert that food practices can reflect and reinforce cultural identity, while also serving as a means of acculturation and cultural adaptation. For instance, Luo and Han (2018) found that

food culture significantly influenced Chinese consumers' willingness to purchase organic food, suggesting that food choices are shaped by cultural values and beliefs. In addition, Katz (2010) proposes that human biology and culture have co-evolved over time, with food practices playing a key role in shaping human health and well-being. Pollan's (2013) work on the transformative power of cooking also highlights the cultural dimensions of food, demonstrating how the act of cooking can connect people with their cultural heritage and identity. Together, these sources demonstrate the crucial connection between food and culture, highlighting the various ways in which food practices and choices are shaped by cultural traditions, beliefs, and values.

Food culture in the Netherlands is characterized by a rich variety of dishes that reflect both local and international influences. Traditional Dutch cuisine is known for its hearty and filling dishes, such as stamppot (mashed potatoes mixed with vegetables like kale or sauerkraut), erwtensoep (a thick pea soup with smoked sausage), and bitterballen (deep-fried meatballs). These dishes are often enjoyed during the colder months and are a testament to the country's agricultural roots. However, the Netherlands' colonial history and multicultural society have also influenced its food culture, with dishes like nasi goreng (Indonesian fried rice) and roti (a Surinamese flatbread filled with curry) becoming increasingly popular. In recent years, the Netherlands has also seen a surge in artisanal and sustainable food production, with many small-scale farmers and food producers adopting organic and eco-friendly practices (van der Ploeg & Roep, 2018). This trend has been fueled by a growing interest in healthy and sustainable eating, as well as a desire to preserve local food traditions. Overall, food culture in the Netherlands is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon that reflects the country's diverse history, values, and social trends.

The migration of Turkish people to the Netherlands in the mid-twentieth century has had a significant impact on Dutch food culture (Cakir & Yildirim, 2017). Turkish immigrants brought with them a rich culinary tradition, including dishes like kebab, baklava, and stuffed grape leaves, which have become increasingly popular among Dutch consumers. In addition, Turkish cuisine has influenced Dutch food culture in more subtle ways, such as the use of herbs and spices like cumin and coriander, which are now commonly found in Dutch dishes. Furthermore, Turkish food culture has contributed to the popularity of street food in the Netherlands, with Turkish-style fast food vendors becoming a common sight in many cities. The influence of Turkish food culture in the Netherlands can also be seen in the proliferation of Turkish supermarkets and specialty food shops, which cater to both Turkish and Dutch consumers. Overall, the migration of Turkish people to the Netherlands has brought a rich and diverse culinary tradition to the country, enriching the local food culture, and providing new opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and understanding. By embracing Turkish food culture, Dutch consumers have not only broadened their culinary horizons but have also shown a willingness to learn about and appreciate different cultures. This exchange of food and culinary traditions can help to break down barriers between communities, foster understanding and respect, and create a more inclusive society.

While the focus on Turkish culinary culture in the Netherlands is indeed influenced by Middle Eastern food culture, it is important to note that Turkish cuisine encompasses a much broader range of flavors and influences. Turkish food culture is characterized by its diversity, drawing inspiration from various regions within Turkey, including Mediterranean, Black Sea, Anatolian, Caucasian, Balkan, and Central Asian cuisines. By strategically promoting the entirety of Turkish gastronomy, including its regional specialties and unique dishes, a comprehensive representation of Turkish food culture can be achieved in the Dutch market. This broader approach not only highlights the richness and depth of Turkish culinary traditions but also encourages a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse flavors, techniques, and cultural heritage present within Turkish cuisine and culture.

Research has shown that fast food can be a successful branding practice due to its high brand recognition, convenience, and affordability. According to a study by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, fast food chains have a high level of brand recognition due to their consistent branding across locations and widespread advertising campaigns (Cho, Kim, & Kim, 2018). This brand recognition can lead to increased brand loyalty among consumers, as they are more likely to remember and choose the brand when making dining decisions. Additionally, a study by the University of South Australia found that convenience and affordability are key factors in the success of fast-food branding, as they appeal to a wide range of consumers, including those who might not be able to afford more expensive dining options (Mayer & McVey, 2018). Overall, these factors make fast food a valuable tool for building brand awareness and loyalty among consumers.

Brands that can forge a deep connection with culture are more likely to resonate with consumers and build brand loyalty. This idea is supported by several academic sources that emphasize the importance of cultural branding and understanding cultural differences to build successful brands. One of the most influential articles on this topic is Holt's (2004) "How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding." In this article, Holt argues that brands can become icons by establishing a deep connection with cultural myths, symbols, and rituals. By doing so, they become part of consumers' cultural identity and create a sense of shared meaning with their target audience. This allows them to transcend the typical constraints of marketing (due to prioritizing immediate sales-driven objectives) and tap into deeper, more emotional connections with consumers. Another key study on this topic is Escalas and Bettman's (2005) "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning." This study explores how consumers use brands to express their cultural identity and suggests that successful brands often become associated with reference groups and cultural values. By aligning themselves with these values and reference groups, brands can become a symbol of cultural identity for their consumers. Douglas and Craig's (2006) "International Marketing Research" emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences to successfully market and brand products in different countries. The authors argue that brands that can forge a deep connection with local culture are more likely to be successful in foreign markets. This is because consumers are more likely to identify with brands that resonate with their cultural identity and values. Finally, Holt's (1998) "Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?" explores the relationship between cultural capital and consumption. The study argues that successful brands often become associated with cultural values and social status. By tapping into these cultural values and symbols, brands can become a status symbol and a way for consumers to signal their social identity to others. Taken together, these studies suggest that brands that can forge a deep connection with culture are more likely to resonate with consumers and build brand loyalty. This can be achieved by tapping into cultural myths, symbols, and rituals; aligning with reference groups and cultural values; understanding cultural differences in foreign markets; and becoming a status symbol for consumers. Companies seeking to build successful brands should take these factors into account and work to create a brand identity that resonates with their target audience's cultural identity and values. By doing so, they can establish a deeper, more emotional connection with their customers and build brand loyalty that lasts.

1.   Project Approach

A tailor-made approach has been developed for this project (refer to Figure 0). The approach begins with a pressure cooker session, followed by a circuit of culture analysis based on the findings of the pressure cooker. Contextual research is conducted, complemented by additional market research and an exploration of traditional Turkish gastronomy. This forms the foundation for defining the design goal. Using the brand building framework from the 'Brand and Product Commercialization' course in the Strategic Product Design Master program at TU Delft, a brand is developed. The subsequent commercialization activity is planned following the launch campaign framework of the same course. This ensures the development of a culture-sensitive brand and a successful commercialization strategy, which are considered essential for success according to this thesis report. To further enhance the approach, the principles of the 'Technology Entrepreneurship and Internationalization' elective course (TPM 404B) are incorporated through the "entrepreneurship in action" step and various evaluation activities.
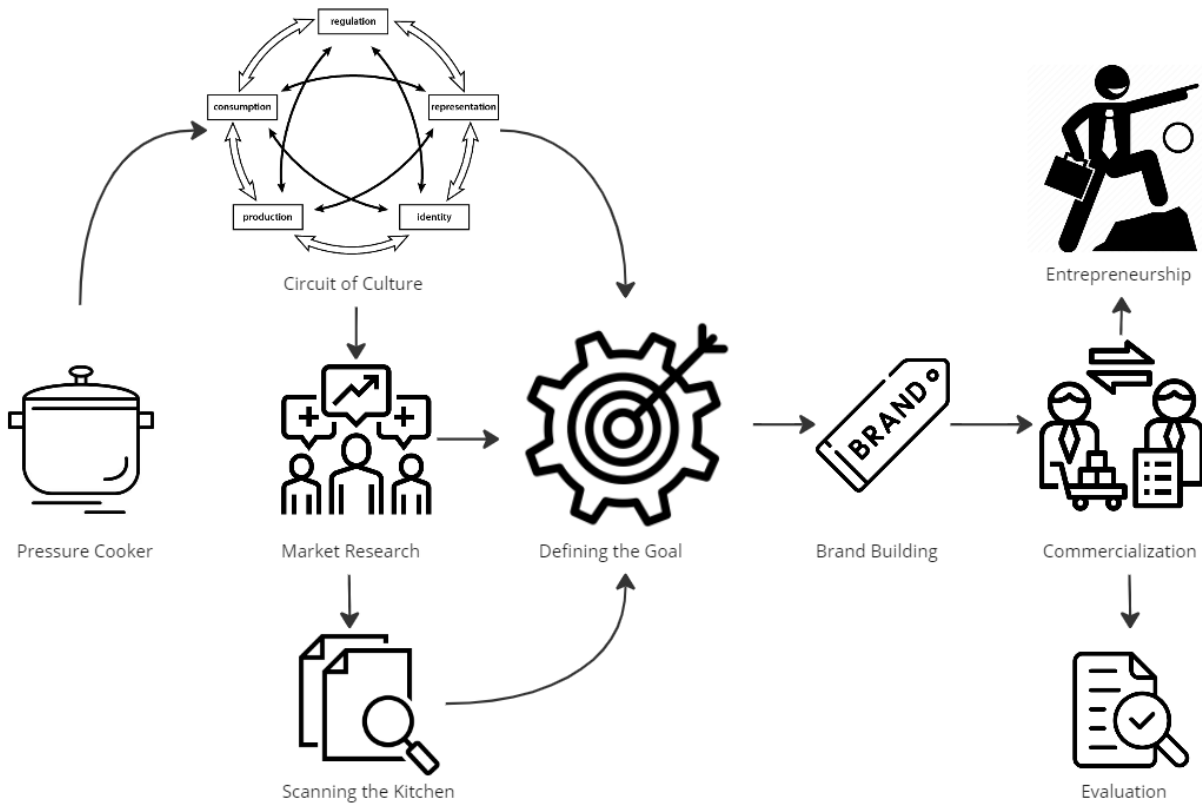

Figure 0: Overall approach to the project, highlighting the important steps.

A two-week long pressure cooker session was conducted at the beginning of the project. With the help of pressure cooker session, high volume of ideas, solutions, and decisions are generated, allowing for a clearer understanding of the project's goals, scope, and scale. This session simulates the actual research and design phases of the project. More concretely, at the beginning of the project, the team was not sure what to expect at the end of the project. The results of the pressure cooker session provided a good summary of the possible outcomes of the project in a nutshell.

As the context research simulation, several Turkish restaurants were visited during Christmas time in 2022, and observations were made of their exterior, interior, environment, and food. The main outcomes of this step were that there was limited means used for branding, only meat/chicken-based foods, and no Christmas decorations. I focused on the last observation for the sake of time and cultural sensitivity. This observation was particularly interesting as Christmas is a big part of Turkish culture. Not in a Christian way, but Turkish people celebrate Nardugan way before Christians celebrate Christmas. Some Sumerologists even argue that this tradition passed to Western cultures through Turkic cultures (Çığ, 2000). In Turkey, it is common to decorate a pine tree during Christmas and celebrate the new year with family gatherings, exchanging gifts, and making wishes for the new year. It was surprising to note that, despite the opportunity to build more connection with Christian Dutch culture, Turkish people are not holding onto their own culture.

As the demand research simulation, global trends around fast-food consumption was examined as a correspondence of the actual demand research conducted with participants to learn about consumer preferences. The outcome of this step was that there is a huge vegan trend in the fast-food industry, followed by big companies like KFC, McDonald's, and others. Large chains are promoting plant-based meat options (GlobalData, 2021; Stangel, 2020).

As the offering research simulation, a search was conducted for vegan options in traditional Turkish gastronomy that could be suitable for fast-food consumption and not yet commercialized in the market. Ten different alternatives were identified with properties like; highly nutritious, diverse health benefits, threatened with extinction, and traditionally consumed by locals.

Finally, as the last step of the pressure cooker session, packaging options were explored, a logo was created for branding, and slogans were developed to create a new commercial activity with strong distinctive claims, traditional motives, recipes, and ingredients. A special campaign was arranged for Christmas to promote the culture.

The details of this session can be seen in Appendix A1. It is important to note that this pressure cooker session was just the beginning of the project and does not represent the entire scope of the work that was completed.

b. Context Research with Circuit of Culture Model

Following the pressure cooker phase, the research began with the context research endeavor aimed at comprehending the meaning of Turkish fast-food restaurants in The Hague and identifying the factors that influence these meanings. The Hague is chosen due to the abundance of Turkish fast-food restaurants in the region and their proximity to the first author (for reasons of convenience, budget, and time). To achieve this, a rigorous Circuit of Culture (CoC) analysis has been planned (Hall, du Gay, Janes, Mackay & Negus, 1997), with a specific focus on the domains of identity, representation, and consumption (refer to Figure 1) (Most relevant aspects when analyzing a culture of restaurants as discussed with supervisors).

Initially, the findings of the pressure cooker session were reviewed, which revealed that the branding was limited to plain text, red-only, and cheap lighting with no attention to customer-based brand equity. Furthermore, only Turkish names were used, meat-based foods were served, and no efforts were made to incorporate Turkish cultural elements that could help establish a connection with Dutch culture. Based on these findings, eight initial research directions were formulated; following global trends, presenting Turkish culture, fitting with Dutch cultural values, conscious branding, customer resonation, quality of food, strategy for customer satisfaction, and restaurant conditions, to understand the goals, values, and responsibilities of these fast-food restaurants. These research directions constitute the foundation of the context research.

The semi-structured research protocol was developed. The selection of the restaurants was based on four criteria (originates from the pressure cooker session): brand equity, traditional authentic fit, integration with Dutch culture, and fit with global trends. The restaurants are initially rated on these criteria and then a selection is made based on the ratings (More details can be found about the selection of the participating restaurants in Appendix A11). The research protocol was refined after conducting a pilot research session, and revisions were made in the first and second reflection sessions to optimize the research and collect more accurate data. In total, 16 fast-food restaurants and 26 fast-food consumers with diverse backgrounds in The Hague participated in the context research.

A circuit of culture analysis, as proposed by Hall, du Gay, Janes, Mackay, & Negus (1997), was conducted. The research paid special attention to comparing different consumer perspectives with varying demographics, analyzing the historical evolution timeline of the restaurants, identifying cultural dilemmas present in the context, and understanding the goals, values, and responsibilities of these restaurants. The context research provided a comprehensive understanding of the culture of Turkish fast-food restaurants in The Hague.
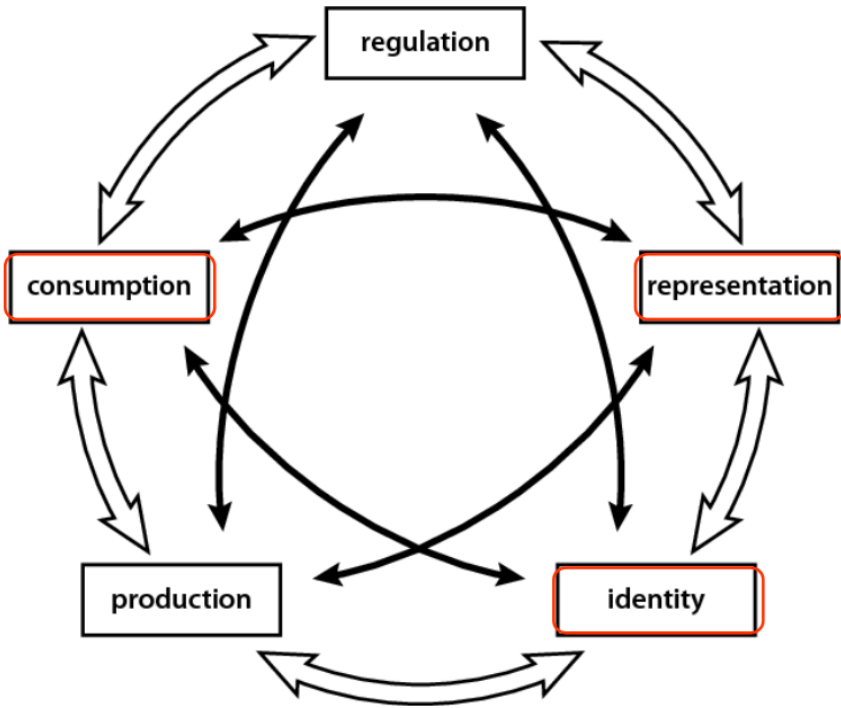
Figure 1: The Circuit of Culture analysis model. Identity, representation, consumption highlighted.

a. Market Research to Find the Demand of the Dutch Market

Following the context research, a demand research project was initiated to better understand the customer perspective in the fast-food market, independent of the Turkish restaurant context. An initial protocol was created and shared with the mentor for discussion. However, the protocol was simplified by removing focus groups and participant sketching. It was evaluated that these components were not essential to the purpose of the research.

Initially, the demand research was conducted on the streets, but challenges with street interviewing made it difficult to gather insights from participants. In hindsight, the research could have been improved by using a professional camera, microphone, and an attraction to make the interview process more engaging and increase the willingness of people to share their insights.

The opportunity to conduct the research presented itself during the de Delftse Bedrijvendagen (DDB) event, which had a diverse range of participants with an open attitude towards conversations with others. Semi-structured demand research was conducted with eleven participants to understand their desires in fast food. The results of this research were used to filter the options for the subsequent research project on offering. More information about the demand research can be found in chapter 3.

For this research, a purposive sampling approach was utilized to ensure a diverse group of participants. Eleven participants were selected based on varying ages, ethnicities, occupations, and genders to provide a comprehensive perspective on fast-food consumption in the Netherlands. The sample consists of six Dutch individuals, two Turkish individuals, and one participant each from the United States, India, and Mexico. The age range of the participants varies between 21 and 52 years old, ensuring a mix of perspectives from different life stages. Six of the participants are currently enrolled as students, while the remaining five are working professionals in various fields. Gender distribution among participants is relatively balanced, with seven female participants and five male participants. This approach to participant selection provides a diverse set of perspectives, which is essential to accurately assess the fast-food consumption habits and preferences in the Dutch market.

b. Scanning the Traditional Turkish Kitchen to Find a Fit

After the demand research, the next step was to make a scanning of traditional Turkish gastronomy. This involved conducting desk research to determine what potential offerings could meet the demands of the market from the traditional Turkish gastronomy pool. The researcher spent a week delving into Turkish food culture to explore possible options for promotion. In total, 18 options from different regions of Turkey were evaluated, each with varying ingredients and preparation techniques.

Despite the wide variety of options available, one particular option emerged as the perfect fit based on the insights gained from the previous two research projects. This selection was made with careful consideration of the factors identified in the context research and demand research. More information on the details of the offering research can be found in chapter 4.

It is important to note that the offering research was a crucial component of the overall project, as it helped to identify a specific product that would resonate with the target market. This step was essential in developing a successful marketing strategy for the Turkish fast-food restaurants in Den Haag. The research allowed for a better understanding of the food culture and preferences of the target market, which in turn helped to refine the offerings of the restaurants. The careful selection of the ideal offering was a key factor in creating a successful marketing campaign that would appeal to the target audience.

c.   Defining the Design Goal

During this crucial stage of the project, a culmination of extensive groundwork and thorough research lays the foundation for the project's vision to take shape before progressing into the realms of branding and commercialization. Within the confines of this chapter, a comprehensive synthesis of prior knowledge and findings is orchestrated to construct a cohesive and inspiring vision.

This step delves into the intricate details surrounding the theories of integration, meticulously formulating and analyzing their essence and practical implications for the project at hand. It serves as a platform for distilling the core principles of integration theory, filtering out extraneous elements, and presenting a refined understanding that aligns with the project's objectives. By dissecting and scrutinizing these theories, the chapter serves as a beacon of knowledge, illuminating the project's path toward informed decision-making and strategic implementation.

In addition to elucidating the theories of integration, the chapter expands its scope to encompass the contextual considerations and the desired customer experiences that will shape the subsequent design phase. By exploring various potential situations and their implications, the chapter fosters a holistic approach that takes into account the project's ecosystem, ensuring its alignment with the prevailing market dynamics, cultural nuances, and user expectations. This thorough analysis and exploration of scenarios provide the necessary groundwork to create a brand that resonates deeply with the target audience and meets their needs effectively.

Crucially, the chapter establishes the vital connection between the selected food item and the overarching vision of the project. By highlighting the synergies between the culinary offering and the project's broader objectives, it underscores the strategic relevance and rationale behind the decision. This ensures that the selected food item becomes an embodiment of the project's vision, embodying its values, purpose, and identity. This alignment not only enhances the project's credibility and coherence but also serves as a powerful tool for engaging stakeholders and capturing the imagination of potential customers.

In summary, this pivotal stage represents the confluence of previous efforts and research, consolidating them into a cohesive and compelling project vision. The chapter's focus on the theories of integration provides a solid theoretical foundation for decision-making, while the exploration of scenarios and contextual factors ensures a user-centric approach in the subsequent design phase. Finally, by establishing a profound connection between the selected food item and the overarching vision, the chapter imbues the project with a sense of purpose and direction, reinforcing its market positioning and amplifying its potential impact.

d. Brand Building

Based on the preceding steps of the methodology, the process of brand building commences with a comprehensive examination of the brand, product, and conducting a 4C analysis (Consumer, Competition, Context, Company). Through brand analysis, a suitable company is identified that aligns with the desired design objective. By scrutinizing its brand, we gain valuable insights into what aspects should be incorporated or excluded in the final brand. Evaluating the product or selected food option allows for an assessment of its attributes, encompassing functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits, which form the foundation of effective branding. Analyzing the target consumers provides valuable clues regarding the intended market segment. Furthermore, analyzing the competition aids in positioning the brand strategically. The contextual analysis derives from comprehensive research, analyzing the context with a more targeted approach regarding to branding. The analysis of three potential company options fosters a solid groundwork for brand development. This meticulous analysis serves as the bedrock for creating the brand.

The subsequent phase of brand creation centers around positioning the brand within the competitive landscape, thereby setting it apart from rival entities. This process identifies the unique attributes of the brand. The most pivotal aspect of brand creation lies in the development of the brand DNA. The brand DNA encapsulates the essence of the brand and is built upon the preceding groundwork. It serves as a guiding principle for all subsequent decisions. The chapter concludes with the establishment of a visual brand identity that is closely aligned with the brand DNA.

e. Commercialization

The process of commercialization commences with the formulation of a definitive key message that will permeate the entire campaign. This key message originates from the brand DNA and can be effectively communicated through various channels, ensuring its reception by the target audience. Subsequently, the identification of a niche market takes place, strategically determining the most advantageous market segment to be targeted initially. Based on this niche market, a persona is developed to gain a deep understanding of the target consumer. The persona's daily routine is thoroughly examined to identify and analyze potential touchpoints where the brand can engage with the audience. Through these touchpoints, the primary objective is to effectively convey the key message of the campaign to consumers and establish an initial relationship with potential customers.

Following this, meticulous media planning is undertaken to coordinate and organize all the activities involved in the commercialization process, while also devising a comprehensive budget. Finally, culminating the chapter, a customer conversion journey is constructed based on the number of customers progressing through various stages of the funnel, including awareness, consideration, intention, purchase, and ultimately loyalty.

f. Entrepreneurship in Action

Following the completion of the branding and commercialization phase, the next crucial step is to materialize all the strategic efforts. This process commences with the safeguarding of intellectual property rights, specifically focusing on securing trademarks for the brand name, logo, and slogan. Subsequently, the requisite permissions are obtained from the relevant authorities to initiate the entrepreneurial journey. This is then accompanied by the development of a pricing strategy, balancing profitability and affordability to effectively cater to the target audience and maintain competitiveness within the market.

In order to establish a profound connection and foster an emotional bond with the target consumers, it is imperative to consistently uphold the brand purpose throughout all brand activities, from the highest level to the smallest details. Enhancing customer resonance can be achieved through various means, such as incorporating brand-related wearables for employees, designing the interior of establishments in alignment with the brand identity, and ensuring captivating packaging for the food products. These examples contribute to enhancing the overall brand experience and reinforcing the desired connection with the target audience.

PHASE 2 – Research

2. Context Research with Circuit of Culture Model
    a. Initial Settings
        i. Preparation of the research

Several iterations have been conducted to refine the research protocol and to prepare it for the fieldwork. Please refer to Appendix A2 for a detailed outline of the research protocol and the interview questions. The interview structure is derived from the Circuit of Culture Framework illustrated in Figure 1, which provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to understanding the various cultural elements that shape the meaning and significance of Turkish fast-food restaurants in The Hague. This approach ensures that the research questions are carefully crafted to capture the multiple dimensions of the research problem and that the data collected are analyzed holistically, taking into account the complex interplay between the different cultural domains.

    b. Conducting the Research
        i. Pilot research

The pilot research conducted for this study involved close collaboration with the owners of the fast-food restaurants 'Durumcu' and 'Alev'. These restaurants were chosen due to the existing relationship between the first author and their owners. The findings revealed that these restaurants had no explicit goals to contribute to society or address social issues such as cultural integration, discrimination prevention, or sustainable consumption. Their primary focus was profit-making, and the food they served was frozen, low-quality, and not truly Turkish. While they served doner, the taste and quality were different from the authentic Turkish doner. Therefore, despite claiming to be Turkish, the only Turkish aspect of these restaurants is their name and hospitality.

Furthermore, the pilot research revealed that the food served at these restaurants lacked originality and uniqueness and was similar to what is available in other fast-food chains. The reputation of these restaurants was limited to their local neighborhood, and they had a limited focus on branding and aesthetics. However, they made attempts to attract Dutch and international customers, for example, by serving beer, which is not a common feature in traditional Turkish restaurants in the Netherlands.

Another restaurant that was included in the pilot research was 'Ekmekci,' which was categorized as 'exemplary' in the selection process. 'Ekmekci' started in 2014 with one location in Rotterdam and has since expanded to nine locations, with over 200 employees. They have won the 2022 franchise starter award in the Netherlands and have achieved national recognition and brand equity. Their vision is to become an international phenomenon and connect the world through their food.

The restaurant's strength lies in its ability to maintain consistency in its brand visual communication, which is evident in its use of a tree in its logo, on its packaging, clothing, and interior design. This symbolizes the company's vision of "connecting the world." They specialize in serving 'gozleme,' which is a traditional savory Turkish pastry dish, and are doing well in keeping up with global trends, which is evident in their packaging and service style.

Moreover, the restaurant has been successful in integrating Turkish culture with Dutch culture by using a Turkish proverb as its slogan in Dutch, which means 'a hungry bear doesn't dance.' Although they are a

good example of a successful Turkish restaurant in the Netherlands, one potential criticism is the lack of originality in their food. With the level of success they have achieved, it is possible to commercialize other Turkish foods in the Dutch market. Gozleme, their specialty, is not a truly authentic option, and other Turkish restaurants in Den Haag also serve it, making it less unique in the market.

Figure 3: Starting from the top left; the interior, personnel, outside look, menu, logo, and a traditional Turkish woman making gozleme (Gozlemeci Sevim Teyze, not from 'Ekmekci').

ii.   Reflection session one

Following the pilot interview with fast-food restaurant owners, it became evident that gathering data from restaurants in the 'majority' cluster regarding their visions, goals, values, and responsibilities would be challenging. Moreover, it presented an opportunity to revisit the research's purpose by questioning why cultural considerations were necessary. To address this question, van Boeijen's (2014) study on crossing cultural chasms has been referred. Among the five reasons cited in the study, four were deemed pertinent to this research: promoting elements of Turkish culture in the Netherlands to affirm a culture, aligning with Dutch culture to prevent mismatch, changing elements of Turkish fast-food culture in the Netherlands, and bridging Dutch and Turkish cultures.

The recommended procedure of the study was followed to guide the research process, and three eye-opener cards were selected: "I know my stance," "people need identities," and "I change people's lives." Additionally, three insights cards were chosen: "a process of change," "culture (dilemmas)," and "from values to form." Based on these insights, the research activities were redefined to place greater emphasis on dilemmas, draw inspiration from different perspectives, and incorporate cards aimed at assisting participants in expressing their restaurant's goals, values, and responsibilities. While the boundaries and socio-cultural dimensions of the research had already been defined, these adjustments allowed for a more comprehensive and nuanced investigation by utilizing cultural probes (Sanders & Stappers, 2013).

Before starting the interviewing phase, a deck of cards with universally used symbols and figures that could be associated with deeper meanings and values which could help restaurant owners to define and express their business has been prepared. Together with religious and national symbols, there are other symbols representing cultural elements, universality, love, uniqueness, food trends, hospitality, and balance. The collection of these cards is depicted in Figure 4. During the interviews, participants are presented with this deck of cards and asked them to choose three cards that best represented their establishment. By incorporating these cards into the data collection process, participants were better able to articulate their restaurant's goals, values, and responsibilities, leading to a more robust and nuanced analysis.

Figure 4: The Card Deck.

iii. First set of restaurants

The research methodology was strengthened for the initial phase of this research study, which involved the visitation of the first set of participating restaurants. Seven restaurants were selected, along with nine individuals from each of these restaurants, with the goal of understanding the culture of these establishments. The participating restaurants were Perla, Ensar, Amin, Aksu, Emirdag, Konya Tandir, and Taste of Istanbul.

The four of these restaurants were classified under the 'majority' category, while the remaining three required an on-site visit to be categorized. These four restaurants were Ensar, Amin, Aksu, and Emirdag.

The data collection process for the first set of research took longer than the second set due to the meticulous approach employed while going over all the research protocol and interview questions in great detail. The detailed results of this research are presented in Appendix A3.

The findings of this research study provide valuable insights into the culture of the participating restaurants, shedding light on the key factors that significantly influence their practices and values. These findings have practical implications for individuals interested in understanding the cultural nuances of restaurants in the region, and could inform future research endeavors in this domain.

          iv.   Reflection session two

Upon careful reflection, I have recognized the need for a second session to refine the interview structure and questions, based on the following reasons:

- Some of the questions were yielding repetitive answers, which led to a lack of valuable insights.
- Certain questions required too much explanation, which made participants feel suspicious or uncomfortable, resulting in unproductive responses.
- There was a realization that some additions to the research questions would be valuable in better understanding the meaning of these restaurants.
- Certain questions were leading to repetitive insights, which decreased participants' excitement and interest.
- There was a need to structure some parts of the research better to increase the fluency of data collection.

To address these concerns, the interview structure was refined with a new set of questions. Following their consent, participants were asked to describe their restaurant and how it evolved over time, highlighting what changed and what remained the same and why. They were also asked about the relations of their restaurant with Turkish, Dutch, and any other cultures, as well as their efforts to follow global trends.

Other questions inquired about observations such as halal signs, decorations, and the number of people in the restaurant. Participants were asked about their explicit efforts for branding, marketing, and commercialization, as well as the hidden rules of the industry, such as policies regarding alcohol and pets.

Questions also delved into customer relations, demographics of the customers, and percentages. Participants were asked about other ways customers could experience their brand beyond dining, such as catering or takeout. Information about which meals were covered in the restaurant, what time of day they were served, and who their biggest unintended customers were, was also gathered.

Finally, participants were asked for permission to talk to a customer, take a picture of the interior, and asked them to pick three cards out of the desk that best describe their restaurant. Through these refined questions, a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural significance of these restaurants could be obtained.

v. Second set of restaurants

Following the second reflection, the research process has become more streamlined and efficient for both the participating restaurants and myself. This led to a more productive and enjoyable experience for all parties involved, resulting in a richer collection of valuable insights. In this refined phase of the research, I conducted interviews with nine additional restaurants and seventeen consumers. The participating restaurants were Adam Brodjezaak, Bogazici, Saray, Hilal, Cigkoftem, Shoarma Osman, Ses Doner, Meram, and Simit Sarayi.

Out of these, six restaurants belong to the 'majority' category, namely Adam Brodjezaak, Bogazici, Hilal, Cigkoftem, Shoarma Osman, and Ses Doner, while Simit Sarayi falls under the 'exemplary' category. Although some restaurants had no customers to interview, in certain establishments, it was possible to interact with multiple ones. The consumer participants were carefully selected to reflect a diverse range of perspectives towards Turkish fast-food restaurants.

Despite encountering some challenging situations in certain restaurants, I persisted in pushing my boundaries for the sake of collecting robust data. The detailed results of this research can be found in appendix A3, where readers can access a wealth of valuable insights.

c. Results

Beginning with the simple quantitative data, it is observed that the Turkish Flag has been picked 19 times, followed by Love with 13 times and Islam with 12 times by restaurant owners. The cards depicting a strong sense of national and religious identity have been picked the most, whereas there is not much emphasis on Dutch social identity.

Regarding production, except for 'Ekmekci,' none of the restaurants have an idealistic social goal such as 'connecting people,' which is considered essential for strong branding. Instead, they tend to create meaning around religious motives such as providing halal food to people to prevent them from sin, etc. This is reflected in two to three samples collected during the research. Furthermore, half of the samples showed that the food served at the restaurants is of low quality, unoriginal, and frozen.

Moving on to identity, the restaurants are mostly associated with the Turkish flag, love, and Islam cards. For most of them, there is no indication that the restaurant is located in the Netherlands. While multiculturalism is widely accepted and minorities are supported in theory, the restaurants have a strong religious (declared social) identity. This creates a certain level of tension with the mostly secularized culture on topics such as gay rights, using motives from Christian culture (such as Christmas decoration), alcohol, and certain foods (such as pork). There were several instances of such tensions noted during interviews, which can be found in appendix A3.

In terms of representation, except for a very few restaurants (1-2), there is little or no attention given to branding. Some are intentionally hesitant to do so to keep their growth controlled, some are unaware of the importance of branding and commercialization, and some are planning to take some actions soon. The interior design of the restaurants is often uncomfortable, lacking attention to coloring, order, poor lighting, GESTALT, or anything else that would create a pleasant atmosphere for customers, potentially damaging their brand equity. The majority of the restaurants are in poor condition with unappetizing aesthetic and visual elements.

Moving on to regulation, the unwritten rule for Turkish restaurants is 'the customer is the boss.' Except for two to three restaurants, they all have an agreement to say 'you cannot say 'no' to your customers.' They represent the 'Turkish hospitality' very well by providing free food and sometimes insisting so much that customers cannot refuse. Another unwritten rule they all follow is hygiene, which is essential in this sector, according to their beliefs. This shows parallelism with the original Turkish culture in Turkey.

Finally, regarding consumption, location plays an important role in the profile of customers for the restaurant. Restaurants closer to the south park in The Hague mostly target Turkish customers. After Turkish people, their biggest customer groups are other ethnic background groups. Ethnic Dutch people constitute only 5-10% of all customers. A few exemplary restaurants attract tourists from abroad, such as France, Belgium, and Germany, with their really tasty doner. In the center of Den Haag and Delft, the consumption habits vary, and more ethnic Dutch people are visiting. Some restaurants close at 6 pm, targeting consumers who come to the center for shopping, while some address consumers at nightlife.

The research highlights several key findings related to the Turkish fast-food restaurant sector in the Netherlands. The study emphasizes the strong religious identity of these restaurants, while also noting their lack of attention to branding and interior design. The research also sheds light on the importance

of location in attracting specific customer groups and the unwritten rules that Turkish restaurants follow. The detailed insights and examples provided in appendix A3 offer a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings.
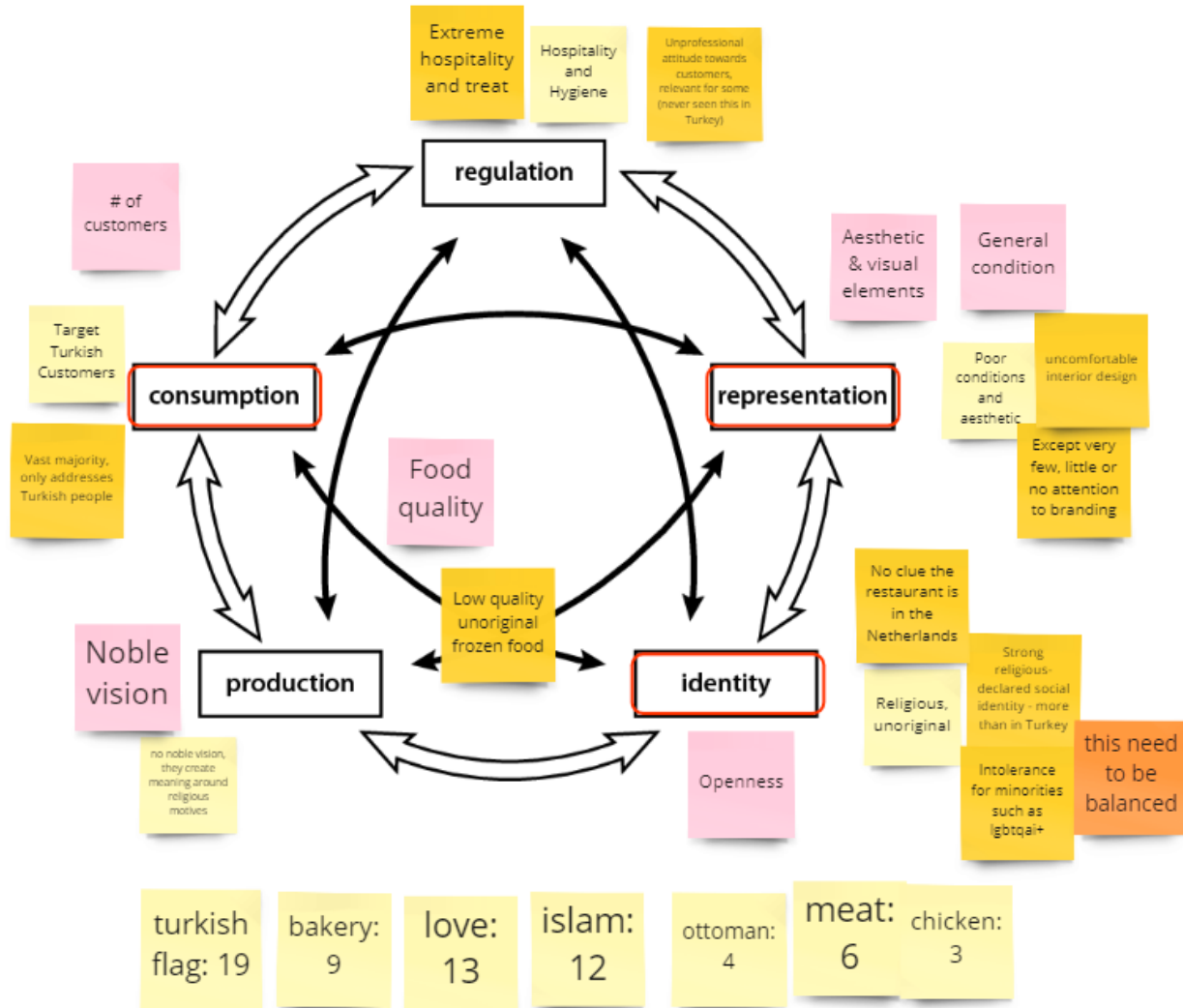

Figure 5: The Circuit of Culture Analysis Based on the Context Research.

3. Market Research to Find the Demand of the Dutch Market
    a. Initial Setting

The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the contexts and consumer scenarios in which fast food is consumed in the Dutch market. Additionally, the study intends to identify any untapped fast-food demands in the Netherlands by utilizing a qualitative methodology.

The study's primary objectives are three-fold:

Firstly, the study seeks to identify the primary contexts and consumer scenarios in which fast food is consumed in the Netherlands. This involves analyzing the different environments in which fast food is consumed, such as at home, in restaurants, and on-the-go. Furthermore, the study will examine the different types of consumers who consume fast food and their respective needs and preferences.

Secondly, the study aims to explore the attitudes and beliefs of fast-food consumers in the Netherlands. This involves understanding the motivations and reasons behind the decision to consume fast food and the factors that influence their choices. Additionally, the study will investigate the perception of fast food and the associations made with it, such as health concerns and social stigmas.

Lastly, the study intends to uncover any untapped fast food demands in the Netherlands. This includes identifying any gaps in the current market and understanding the potential opportunities for new fast-food concepts and products. The study will also examine the potential barriers to entry and the feasibility of introducing new fast-food concepts and products in the Dutch market.

To achieve these objectives, the study will utilize a qualitative methodology which involves in-depth interviews. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of the different contexts and scenarios in which fast food is consumed, as well as an understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of fast-food consumers. Additionally, this will provide a unique perspective on the experience of consuming fast food, which can reveal new insights and opportunities for innovation.

Overall, this study is essential for the fast-food industry in the Netherlands to understand the needs and preferences of consumers and to identify any untapped market opportunities. By providing insights into the contexts and scenarios in which fast food is consumed, the study can help fast food providers tailor their products and services to meet the specific needs of their target consumers. Moreover, by uncovering untapped market demands, the study can help drive innovation and growth in the fast-food industry in the Netherlands.

The research protocol for the demand research initially included focus groups and participant sketching, as outlined in Appendix 4. However, these components were later removed in order to simplify the protocol. The research focused on answering several key questions related to fast-food consumption, including how often individuals consume fast-food, in what context or scenario they tend to consume it, and what they find to be the best and worst aspects of the fast-food they prefer. Additionally, the research aimed to uncover any gaps or unmet needs in the current fast-food market by exploring whether individuals feel there are missing options or aspects that could be improved. These questions were designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of fast-food consumption in the Netherlands and identify any potential opportunities for future growth and innovation in the industry.

b. Results

In this research, a majority of the participants reported consuming fast-food on a regular basis, with eight out of eleven participants consuming fast-food at least once a week. Furthermore, seven out of eleven participants reported consuming fast-food during a night out, suggesting that fast-food is often seen as a convenient option for social occasions. Despite this, the participants were divided in their opinions about the healthfulness of fast-food, with six out of eleven expressing concerns about the nutritional value of fast-food.

When asked about what they like about current fast-food options, the participants had varying responses, with no clear consensus emerging. Some participants reported enjoying the convenience and speed of fast-food, while others mentioned the affordability of fast-food as a positive factor. However, there were also participants who expressed dissatisfaction with the taste and quality of fast-food options currently available on the market.

Interestingly, the majority of participants expressed the opinion that the market could provide more options, with ten out of eleven participants indicating that they believe there are currently not enough options available. This suggests that there may be untapped demand for more diverse and innovative fast-food offerings in the Netherlands, and highlights the potential for businesses to capitalize on this opportunity by developing new and appealing products that meet the needs and preferences of consumers.

For more detailed information on the results of this study, please refer to Appendix 5. The appendix contains a comprehensive breakdown of the data gathered from the participants, including their responses to the various research questions.

Note: Since the number of participants are not much for this qualitative research, supportive quantitative research has been conducted later on. The fast-food consumption popularity results in the same. The night-out consumers revealed slightly less by only constituting the half. Similar percentage of participants indicates the options are unhealthy. Interestingly, the quantitative research revealed %63.6 of participants indicated the market provides rich-fast food options. The details of this research can be read under the title "Indication of the Potential Demand for 'Midye Dolma'" in chapter 13.

4. Scanning the Traditional Turkish Kitchen to Find a Fit
   a. Conducting the Scanning

The selection of traditional Turkish fast-foods to analyze in the Dutch market has been a thorough process based on previous context research and demand research. In order to identify the best options, desk research was conducted, which aimed to filter out the most suitable and promising options for the Dutch market.

During the selection process, various factors were taken into account. First, it was ensured that the food items under consideration were not yet commercialized in the Dutch market. This was important to ensure that the products would have a unique and fresh appeal in the market.

Second, the food items were evaluated based on their potential to create a vibe around them. It was crucial that the food items had a distinctive and recognizable character that would appeal to the target consumers. Additionally, it was considered whether the food items were suitable for fast-food consumption, and whether they could be easily branded, marketed and commercialized.

Third, the demands of the Dutch market were taken into account. It was important that the food items were aligned with the preferences of the Dutch fast-food consumers, and that they had the potential to create new options for the market (See the 'Demand Research').

Fourth, the health aspect was also considered in the selection process. It was important that the food items were healthy and could offer a healthier alternative to some of the existing fast-food options in the market (See the 'Demand Research').

Fifth, the potential for social consumption was also taken into account. It was important that the food items had the potential to be shared and enjoyed in a social setting, which is an important aspect of the Dutch food culture (See the 'Demand Research').

In total, nineteen traditional Turkish food options were researched, brainstormed, and discussed with people in friend and family groups. The scanning was detailed and comprehensive, and the results can be found in appendix 6. Overall, the selection process was rigorous and aimed to identify the most suitable and promising food options for the Dutch market.

b. Results of the Scanning

After conducting extensive research and evaluation, the traditional Turkish food option 'Midye Dolma' has been selected to continue with branding and commercialization in the Dutch market. This decision was based on several factors that make it a promising and suitable option for the target audience.

One of the main reasons why Midye Dolma was chosen is due to its high nutritional value and health benefits. As a fresh and nutritious snack, it offers a healthier alternative to some of the existing fast-food options in the market. For instance, Midye Dolma is a rich source of protein, vitamins, and minerals such as Vitamin A, B12, Potassium, Calcium, and Iron, as well as Omega 3 fats and amino acids. In 100g of mussels, there are 3.6g carbohydrates, 14.7g protein, and 1.0g fat, which make it a satisfying and a wholesome snack.

Furthermore, Midye Dolma is a unique and authentic Turkish snack that aligns with the Dutch snack culture. Its recipe dates back to the first Turkish cookery book, 'Melceü't-Tabbâhîn' in 1844, and has been enjoyed by generations of Turkish people. While the ingredients in Midye Dolma may differ from the original recipe, the most common ingredients are mussel, rice, black pepper, and allspice, and it is served with a squeeze of fresh lemon. This authenticity and rich history make Midye Dolma a distinctive and memorable snack for the Dutch market.

In addition, Midye Dolma has a specific cultural association with nightlife in Turkey. It is a common sight to see a stand selling Midye Dolma during a night out in Turkey, particularly in popular nightlife areas. This cultural association makes it a snack that appeals to people who enjoy a night out and socializing, which is an important aspect of the Dutch food culture.

Overall, Midye Dolma was carefully selected based on its nutritional value, unique and authentic appeal, cultural association with nightlife, and alignment with the Dutch snack culture. The decision was made after rigorous research and evaluation of nineteen traditional Turkish food options. The recipe for Midye Dolma may have evolved over time, but its cultural significance and nutritional value have remained constant, making it a promising and suitable option for the Dutch market.

Figure 6: Midye Dolma: A traditional Turkish snack for Dutch nightlife and beyond.

PHASE 3 – Conceptualization

5. Defining the Design Goal
    a. The Vision Statement
        i. Integration and application of theory

Based on the findings of the contextual research, it has become evident that Turkish fast-food restaurants in Den Haag have strong (declared) Turkish and Islamic identities, but lack a Dutch identity. Additionally, these restaurants do not seem to be well-integrated into Dutch culture, not only due to their absence of a declared Dutch identity, but also because they do not seem to appreciate secular Dutch values or seek relationships with Dutch culture or values. In some cases, separation has been observed, while marginalization is evident in cases where there is no maintenance of heritage culture and identity (Berry, 2005).

One of the primary reasons for resistance to integration lies in the conflicting values between dominant Islamic culture and secular Dutch culture, such as intolerance towards alcohol, discrimination towards gender minorities, and halal food restrictions. Such conflicting values make it challenging for individuals with a declared social identity of Islam to integrate into a secular Dutch culture, according to integration theory (Ward & Chang, 2017; Sam & Berry, 2010; Berry, 2003).

To integrate individuals with Turkish backgrounds into Dutch society, the same integration theory suggests possible ways to ease the process, which becomes easier if there are no conflicting values and/or practices (Berry, 2005). The goal is to achieve basic integration towards Dutch culture by aiming for the intersection of secular Turkish culture and secular Dutch culture. This area is not yet adequately defined, it is promising, and requires the attention of designers. By designing representations such as brands that exist in this area of intersection, we can show society a way of integration where the audience develops a relationship with Dutch culture and values while still maintaining their heritage. In other words, promoting secular Turkish culture could be a first step to a successful integration by focusing on the intersection that hold fewer conflicting values (Figure 7). This will not only create a possibility for better integration of Turkish background people, but also fixing the underrepresented Turkish image.

If carefully designed for this area, successful integration of Turkish background individuals into Dutch society could be achieved to a more significant extent, as opposed to the current unfortunate setting where segregation and marginalization are apparent.
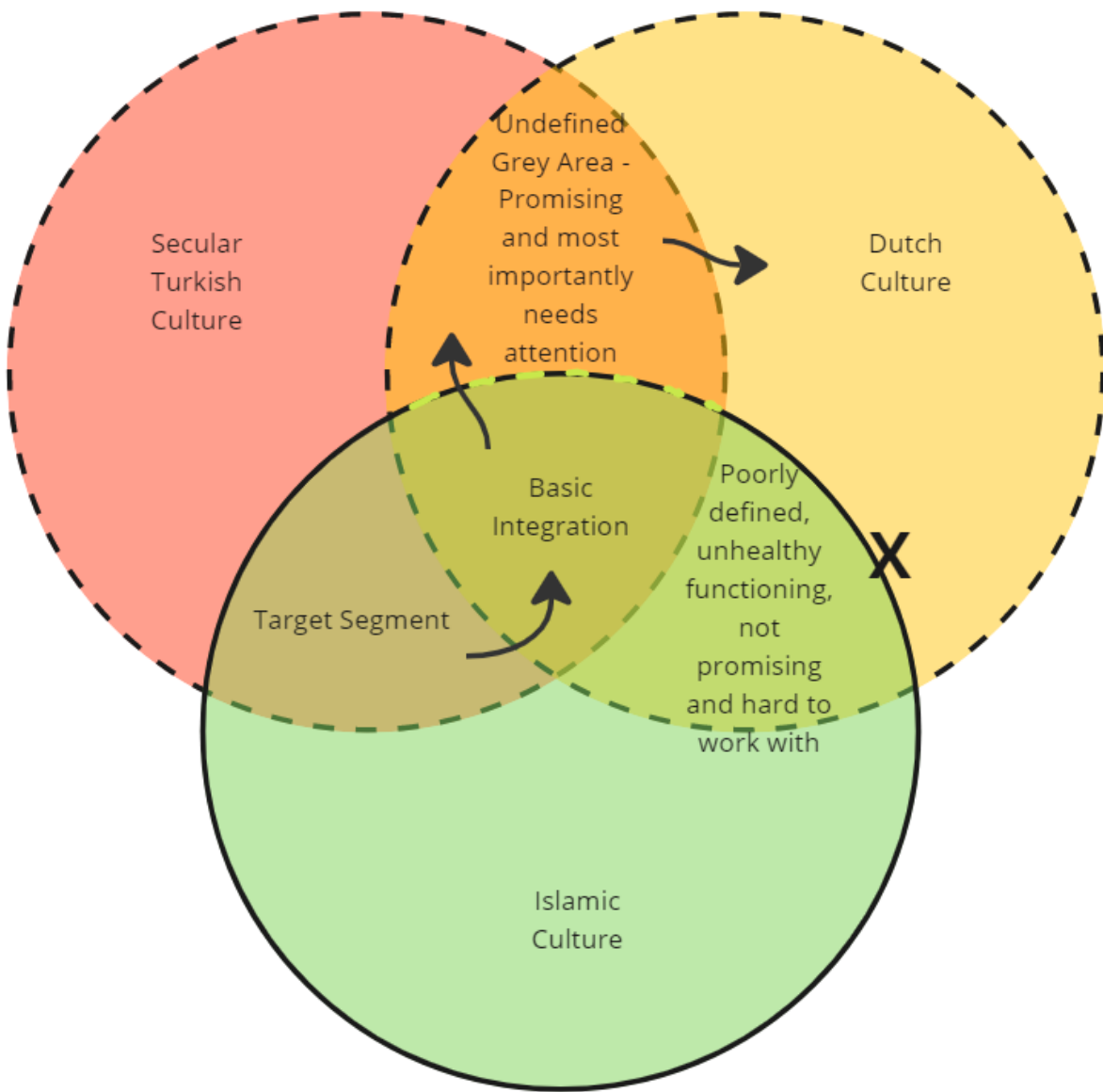
Figure 7: The Schema of Integration.

ii. Envisioned context and customer experiences

Based on the findings of the context research, Circuit of Culture analysis, demand research, and the initial goal of the project, a future context and two different customer experiences have been envisioned. Within this envisioned context, Turkish restaurants represent identities that originate from Turkish culture and address the needs, customs, and culture of the Dutch market. In this sense, 'midye dolma' is a perfect selection as it represents Turkish heritage, caters to the market's demand, is healthy, and is suitable for consumption during a night out, as it is traditionally consumed in nightlife in Turkey. Moreover, it serves as a strong symbol that represents a secular Turkish lifestyle.

In this context, the restaurants can be built with a strong social goal of integration, offering fresh, healthy, and affordable fast food while welcoming and addressing everyone without discrimination. They will foster diversity and inclusion, paying proper attention to branding and the overall appearance of the restaurants. The envisioned brand is associated with togetherness, openness, and connection with others. Consumers will enjoy the atmosphere in the restaurants and voluntarily spread joy and love from the restaurants to the neighborhood.

For example, a young person from a conservative Turkish background family can observe elements from their culture and step in to explore, exchange cultures, and interact with the crowd, influenced by Dutch culture. On the other hand, a person with no or poor preconceptions about Turkish culture may not initially be aware that the food is from Turkish culture. However, they will notice the joy, hospitality, fresh and healthy food, and affordable prices, prompting them to step in and explore. Later, they may learn about secular Turkish culture, engage in cultural exchanges, and invite their friends from different cultures as well.

These goals will be further developed and clarified in the following chapters.

b. The Fit: 'Midye Dolma'
i. How 'midye dolma' connects to the vision

The vision suggests to develop representations for the intersection of secular Turkish Culture and secular Dutch culture, as the prerequisite of successful integration. Midye Dolma is appropriate due to its strong association with secular Turkish culture, as it has been a staple dish in Turkish cuisine for centuries. This is because Midye Dolma is a culturally significant dish that is widely enjoyed and regarded as an integral part of Turkish cuisine. Its preparation and consumption are often linked to important cultural events and traditions, making it an excellent representation of the Turkish heritage.

In addition to being a culturally significant dish, Midye Dolma holds a special place in Turkish night life, as it is often consumed as a popular snack alongside alcoholic beverages. It is a common sight to see street vendors selling Midye Dolma in popular night-life districts, where it is enjoyed by those who lead a secular lifestyle and wish to indulge in a quick and delicious snack while socializing with friends.

The consumption of Midye Dolma with alcohol is deeply ingrained in Turkish culture, where it is seen as a perfect complement to alcoholic beverages such as beer, raki, or wine. Its salty and tangy taste makes it an ideal snack to counteract the effects of alcohol and refresh the palate. Thus, it has become a staple food item in bars, clubs, and restaurants, where it is consumed by people who enjoy the Turkish night life and the social culture that comes with it.

Overall, the cultural significance of Midye Dolma in Turkish night life and its association with alcohol make it an ideal product for the design goal, as it aligns well with the Dutch market's preferences for a social, fresh, and healthy fast-food option (which is also affordable and convenient). Its popularity in secular Turkish culture also adds to its value as a cultural representation of Turkey, making it a unique and authentic addition to the fast-food market.

Furthermore, Midye Dolma is also a perfect fit for the results of the demand research. According to the results, consumers are looking for a new option in the fast-food market that is suitable for social consumption, fresh, and healthy. Midye Dolma fulfills these criteria by being a portable snack that is perfect for socializing while providing a nutritious and fresh option that satisfies consumer's demand for healthy food. Its popularity in Turkish culture also makes it an ideal option for those who wish to maintain a connection to their heritage while enjoying the fast-food experience. Thus, the selection of Midye Dolma as a product aligns well with the cultural and health-related needs of the target market.

6. Brand Building
    a. Analysis to Kick-Start Branding

The process of brand building commences with a comprehensive analysis encompassing brand analysis, product analysis, and 4C analysis (Consumer, competition, context, company). This diligent examination lays the foundation for the subsequent phase of 'brand creation.'

i. Brand analysis of the restaurant 'Istanbul Midye'

After defining the design goal, a small enterprise was discovered in a relatively less renowned area of Den Haag, known as 'Istanbul Midye' (refer to Figure 8). The owner of this restaurant, Serhat, is a young and enthusiastic individual who cultivates and prepares 'midye dolma' among various distinctive Turkish dishes. Serhat recognizes the significance of branding in enhancing the visibility of his one-man operation, particularly in online platforms. His primary objective is to fulfill the yearning for a taste of their homeland among Turkish background individuals, as his customers are mostly them. Consequently, he places great emphasis on incorporating a robust Turkish identity within his branding and logo. Despite its lack of clarity, the branding prominently emphasizes Istanbul, aligning seamlessly with the restaurant's name and goal. At the core of the design, there is a silhouette depicting Istanbul, adorned with its iconic and instantly recognizable architectural landmarks. At the pinnacle, there is a diminutive representation of a mussel; however, its clarity may be somewhat lacking (refer to Figure 9). He prepares social media posts to grab customers' attention (refer to Figure 10). In the post, he uses a slightly different version of the logo. This creates a bit of confusion and decrease the consistency of the brand. As the name of the restaurant, he also uses Turkish slogan 'Her eve girecegiz' which means 'we will enter each home'. This clearly shows he is solely addressing Turkish background individuals. Despite it is already not good to use a slogan that not addresses everyone, the meaning also shows a personal ambition rather than focusing on customer perspective. Besides the contrast of the slogan is poor, making it hardly readable. In the post, the image of the mussels is perfectly clear, look appetizing and healthy. The color use in logo and poster is also consistent, which is a plus.

Figure 8: A look of the restaurant 'Istanbul Midye' from the outside.

Figure 9: The logo of the business 'Istanbul Midye'

Figure 10: An Instagram post from 'Istanbul Midye'

ii. Analysis of 'midye dolma'; features and attributes, functional benefits, emotional benefits, self-expressive benefits

"Midye dolma" is an exquisite dish crafted from fresh mussels, rice, olive oil, black pepper, and allspice. The preparation begins with a thorough washing of the mussels, followed by delicately opening and removing the black part. After another thorough wash, the mussels are filled with half-cooked rice infused with olive oil, pepper, and allspice. The shells are then carefully closed, and the mussels are gently cooked in a pan with the steam of water for approximately 10 minutes. To savor its delightful taste, the shells are opened, and a hint of lemon juice is added.

A portion typically comprises around 6-7 "midye dolma," as the mussels used are larger than the standard ones available in the market. Due to its small portion size, "midye dolma" can be likened to "bitterballen" in its serving. This dish is remarkably nourishing, brimming with essential minerals, vitamins, and amino acids. Setting it apart from the majority of deep-fried alternatives in the fast-food market, "midye dolma" offers a fresh and wholesome option. Furthermore, its relatively high B12 values make it a viable choice for vegans. Since mussels lack a central nervous system and brain, they do not experience pain. Additionally, their cultivation has a lesser environmental impact compared to growing vegetables.

Beyond its distinct culinary characteristics and nutritional value, the functional benefits of "midye dolma" encompass its versatility in promoting health and well-being. It serves as a suitable option for social gatherings, complements alcoholic beverages, and aligns with Dutch snack culture, making it well suited for the Dutch market.

Moving from functional benefits to emotional benefits, "Istanbul Midye" invokes a sense of Turkey in the minds of consumers. Even for those who have never experienced "midye dolma" before, it offers an authentic and original encounter by introducing them to something unique and novel.

Lastly, "midye dolma" provides self-expressive benefits, enabling consumers to express their heritage and embrace multiculturalism through their culinary choices (refer to Figure 11).
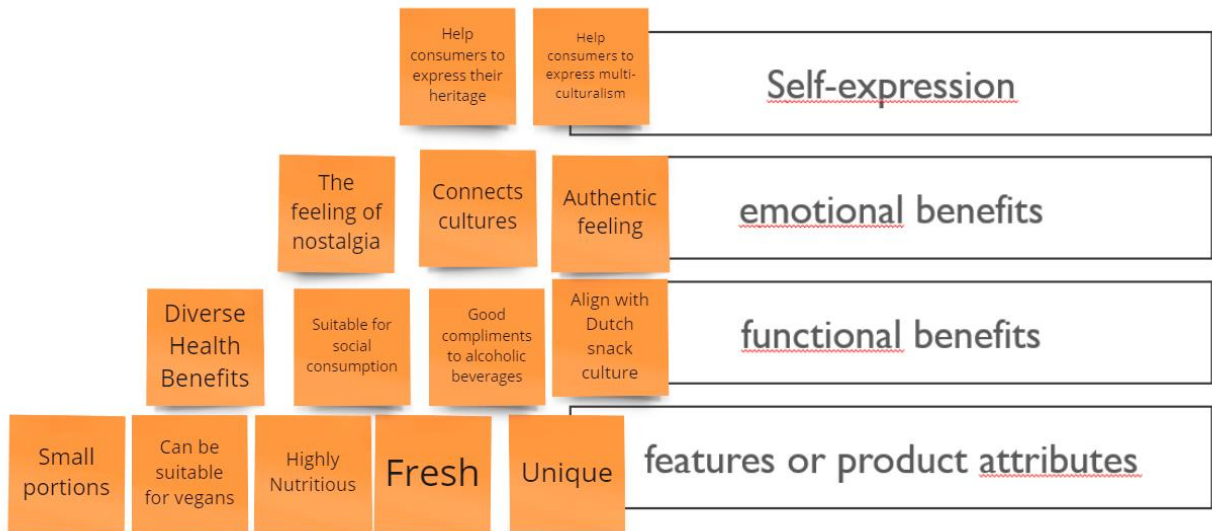
Figure 11: The visualization of the 'midye dolma' analyzes.

To ensure that "midye dolma" resonates with the preferences of the Dutch audience, a visit to ID kafee has been undertook during a regular Wednesday occasion, accompanied by an abundance of "midye dolma" for tasting. Amidst the convivial atmosphere, individuals at ID kafee were invited to sample the dish and share their thoughts. This tasting and interview process was conducted in a casual manner, so as not to disrupt the enjoyment of the patrons or detract from the immersive ambiance.

The reactions elicited from the participants were predominantly inquisitive and positive. The majority expressed that "midye dolma" paired exceptionally well with beer. In fact, one individual expressed an inclination to purchase it daily if it were available in Delft. Some attendees also shared their insights into the mussel culture in the Vilisingen region of the Netherlands, mentioning notable events such as the "Mosselfeesten Middelburg," scheduled to take place from July 27th to 29th, 2023, in that area. A few individuals demonstrated interest in the project, seeking further information and providing informal feedback. At that time, the proposed brand name "aangeschoten mosselen" received their approval. However, it should be noted that there were several individuals with vegan dietary preferences present. Regrettably, our knowledge of the mussels' vegan-friendly attributes was limited at the time, and thus we were unable to convince those individuals who identified as vegan. Additionally, one person indicated that they had a shellfish allergy, which necessitates careful consideration during the commercialization phase.

The demand research conducted during the research phase indicates that half of individuals prefer fast food as a choice during their evening outings, with a primary focus on satisfying cravings and fulfilling hunger. Additionally, half of individuals express a desire for healthier options within the fast-food market, seeking nutritious alternatives. Moreover, a significant portion of fast-food consumers expresses interest in exploring unique flavors and cuisines. While not explicitly stated in the demand research, it is evident that there is a prominent environmental food trend, with consumers increasingly adopting eco-conscious and sustainable practices.

The context research revealed that the majority of Turkish restaurants included in the study do not strategically target any of these identified "jobs to be done." However, over time, these establishments have gained popularity as destinations for individuals engaged in nightlife activities, particularly the doner stores located in close proximity to city centers. These doner stores have now achieved a level of popularity equivalent to that of traditional Dutch snack bars and fritures. Snackbars and fritures are ubiquitous in the Netherlands and often offer a variety of fast-food options that pair well with alcoholic beverages. They serve popular snacks like bitterballen (deep-fried meatballs), kroketten (croquettes), frikandellen (deep-fried sausage), and other deep-fried snacks that are commonly enjoyed alongside a drink. Despite the proliferation of snack bars and doner stores in the market, only a limited number of them have managed to establish significant brand recognition at the national level.

Bram Ladage: Bram Ladage is a popular chain of fast-food outlets known for their freshly-cut Dutch fries. While they primarily focus on fries, they often offer a range of toppings and sauces that can be enjoyed with a drink.

Febo: Febo is a fast-food chain known for its automat-style concept. They offer a range of traditional Dutch snacks, including croquettes, frikandellen, burgers, and cheese sticks. Customers can select their snacks from a wall of vending machines, making it a convenient option for those seeking a quick bite with their drink. They have taken steps to be more environmentally friendly. They have implemented sustainable packaging options, such as biodegradable trays, and have made efforts to reduce their energy consumption. This makes them convince the customers who are looking for eco-conscious and sustainable options.

The Doner Company: The Doner Company is the only Turkish doner restaurant that reaches a national recognition, although there are hundreds of doner shops in the country.

SLA: SLA is a fast-casual salad bar chain that focuses on sustainable, organic, fresh, and nutritious ingredients. They prioritize working with local suppliers, reducing food waste, and promoting eco-friendly practices in their stores. They offer a wide variety of customizable salads, grain bowls, and wraps made with locally sourced produce. SLA's focus on wholesome, nutrient-rich meals makes it a popular choice for health-conscious individuals.

Vegan Junk Food Bar: The Vegan Junk Food Bar is a fast-food brand in the Netherlands that offers plant-based fast-food options. They focus on serving vegan meals made from sustainable and ethical ingredients, reducing the environmental impact associated with animal agriculture.

Maoz: Maoz is a fast-food chain that specializes in falafel. They offer a variety of vegetarian and vegan falafel options, served with a range of toppings and sauces. Their focus on Middle Eastern flavors and fresh ingredients provides a unique and authentic dining experience.

Warung Mini: Warung Mini is a fast-food chain that brings Indonesian cuisine to the forefront. They serve traditional Indonesian dishes such as nasi goreng (fried rice), satay, rendang, and more. Their menu offers a range of authentic Indonesian flavors that are distinct from typical fast-food options.
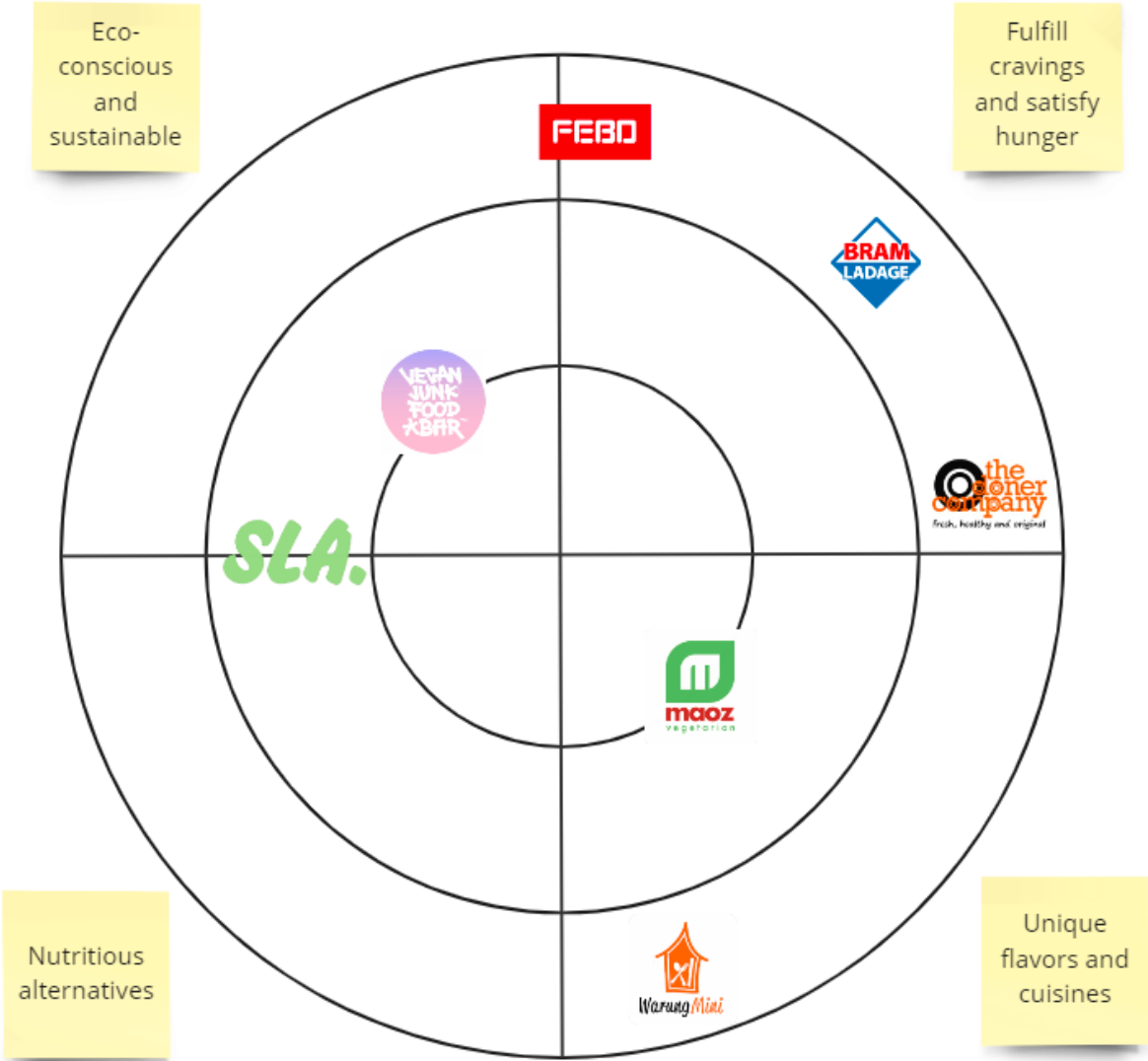

Figure 12: The visualization of the competition analysis.

v. Context analysis; connecting to the findings of the context research

During the context research conducted for this project, it was evident that the majority of Turkish restaurants in Den Haag offer a limited representation of the diverse Turkish gastronomy. These establishments predominantly focus on the culinary culture of the southeastern region. It is important to recognize that food is not solely sustenance, but an integral part of cultural expression. In Turkey, the southeastern region has been influenced by the conservative middle eastern culture, which is also observable in the context of Den Haag.

In the Netherlands, the conservative Islamic culture holds a stronger presence among the Turkish community compared to Turkey itself. For instance, in the recent election, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a leader who largely represents conservative values and Islamic traditions, received 52% of the votes in Turkey. However, in the Netherlands, this percentage rose to 71%, making it one of the highest levels of support for Erdogan worldwide.

The current global financial crisis and inflation have impacted consumer preferences, with individuals seeking affordable food options. In this regard, "midye dolma" holds an advantage due to its low cost and affordable selling price. It becomes a viable choice for those looking for wholesome yet budget-friendly meals in the market.

The majority of Turkish restaurants in Den Haag primarily target individuals of Turkish background, often neglecting the broader audience. Their menus and slogans are exclusively in Turkish, disregarding other potential customers.

Strict government regulations are in place to ensure food safety and health standards are met by fast-food establishments.

Furthermore, there is a notable trend towards eco-friendly practices and sustainability in the fast-food sector. Industry giants like KFC and McDonald's are increasingly advertising plant-based menu options. Another emerging trend is the visual appeal of food and packaging. Many consumers order food with the intention of capturing pictures for sharing on social media platforms. Therefore, it is crucial for the food presentation and packaging to be visually appealing to consumers.

<ol start="6" type="i">
Company analysis of the restaurants 'Istanbul Midye', 'Midyeci Ahmet', and 'Durumcu'

At the onset of the project, a meeting was held with Mr. Ali Uzun, the former owner of the strategically positioned doner shop, 'Durumcu'. The meeting was prompted by the shop's intriguing location, and it quickly became apparent that we shared similar interests and potential for future collaboration. However, Mr. Uzun has since left the fast-food industry, although he remains engaged with the project and maintains regular communication. While he does not express great enthusiasm for the 'midye dolma' concept, he has not completely ruled out the possibility of involvement. As a key investor, his support is crucial to kick-starting the project in the real world.

To my surprise, one of the leading 'midye dolma' brands in Turkey, 'Midyeci Ahmet', recognized the potential in the Dutch market and opening their first shop in Den Haag. Despite my attempts to establish contact, I have not yet been successful. Their marketing strategy does not appear to be specifically tailored to the Dutch market, as the brand name remains Turkish and lacks a distinct logo. However, there is significant potential for targeting the nightlife demographic, as the 'midye dolma' culture in Turkey originated within this context, indicating a proven niche market. Nonetheless, there are no indications that this particular business is actively addressing this niche market.

Presently, close collaboration is being pursued with Serhat, the owner of 'Istanbul Midye', as the analysis centers around his brand. While we are eager to collaborate, we are still searching for the right balance. Serhat possesses all the necessary infrastructure to bring the concept to fruition, but I believe that effective marketing holds the utmost importance. Consequently, I am hesitant to readily divulge my ideas. Negotiations are currently underway, and Serhat, being an open-minded and ambitious young entrepreneur, expresses a strong interest in expansion. He notes a high demand for 'midye dolma' in the market. Due to the unavailability of the appropriate mussel species in the market, he has established his own mussel farm, which adheres to strict government quality control regulations. Furthermore, his establishment boasts a transparent production line, allowing customers to witness each step of the food preparation process.

b. Brand Creation
    i. Positioning design tool; the competition grid; how to differentiate?

In the fast-food sector in Den Haag, there is a range of competition with various brands focusing on different aspects to distinguish themselves. One significant competitor in this space is the 'Vegan Junk Food Bar,' which positions itself as a vegan and environmentally friendly option. However, there are not many brands that are specifically emphasizing their role as a drink companion while also offering nutritious options.

When considering the competition grid or positioning design tool, it becomes evident that the attributes of being a drink companion and providing nutritious offerings can be unique and compelling differentiators for a brand in this market. By leveraging these attributes, a brand can stand out from the competition and cater to the needs of consumers who are seeking both refreshment and healthier food options.

While some competitors are focused on branding themselves as environmentally friendly and vegan, there is an opportunity to carve out a niche by targeting customers who prioritize having a refreshing drink alongside their fast food, while also valuing nutritious choices. This positioning allows the brand to cater to a broader customer base and appeal to health-conscious individuals who still enjoy indulging in fast food but want to make better choices.

By highlighting the unique attributes of being a drink companion and offering nutritious options, the brand can differentiate itself in the market. This can be achieved through strategic marketing and messaging that communicates the brand's commitment to providing refreshing and health-conscious options, emphasizing the importance of balance between indulgence and nutrition.

Overall, the competition in the fast-food sector in Den Haag is intense, with brands focusing on various aspects such as veganism and environmental consciousness. However, by positioning the brand as a drink companion with a strong emphasis on nutritious offerings, it can establish itself as a unique player in the market, catering to customers who value both refreshment and health in their fast-food choices.
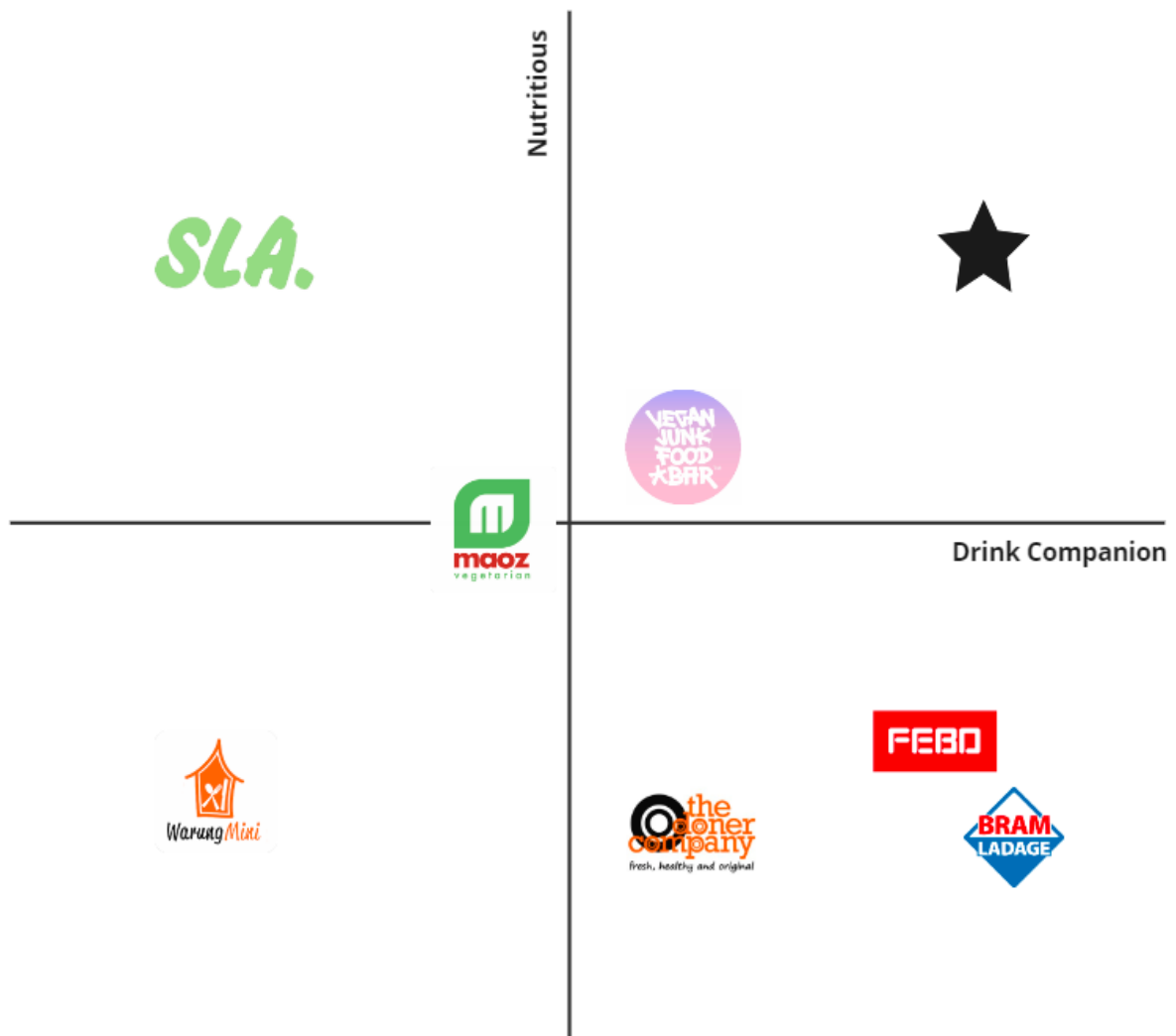
Figure 13: Positioning design tool/competition grid: fast-food sector in Den Haag. The developed brand could strategically be positioned in the upper right corner to fill a gap in the market.

ii.   Brand DNA; brand purpose, positioning, and personality

In this chapter we are defining the brand DNA. Brand DNA refers to the core elements that define and differentiate a brand's identity, essence, and personality. It represents the unique and distinctive characteristics that set a brand apart from its competitors and create a strong and recognizable brand image.

The foundation of this project must be deeply embedded in its brand DNA. The brand aims to set a benchmark for Turkish restaurants in Den Haag, catering not only to Turkish individuals but to a diverse audience. It seeks to proudly and audibly represent secular Turkish culture, ensuring that individuals with Turkish backgrounds unmistakably recognize its Turkish identity. Given the significant Turkish population in the region, they are a primary target audience who should feel their cultural heritage is genuinely acknowledged, arousing curiosity and motivating visits.

Moreover, the brand should effectively convey its positioning within the market, emphasizing its role as a healthy – alcohol companion for those seeking social leisure. By promoting secular Turkish culture, the objective is to foster a healthier integration of individuals with Turkish backgrounds into Dutch society while simultaneously showcasing an underrepresented facet of Turkish culinary culture. Hence, we believe that food serves as a means of integration. The brand is characterized by the personality traits of being "Wholesome, social, sustainable, inclusive, delicious"

The positioning statement is crafted as follows: "For social leisure seekers, 'midye' offers fast food that is nutritionally rich, fresh, and ethically prepared. It provides diverse health benefits, complements beer consumption, and immerses individuals in an authentic cultural experience, enabling them to express multiculturalism and heritage."

We believe food as the way of integration

'midye'

For social leisure seekers, 'midye' offers fast food that is nutritionally rich, fresh, and ethically prepared. It provides diverse health benefits, complements beer consumption, and immerses individuals in an authentic cultural experience, enabling them to express multiculturalism and heritage.
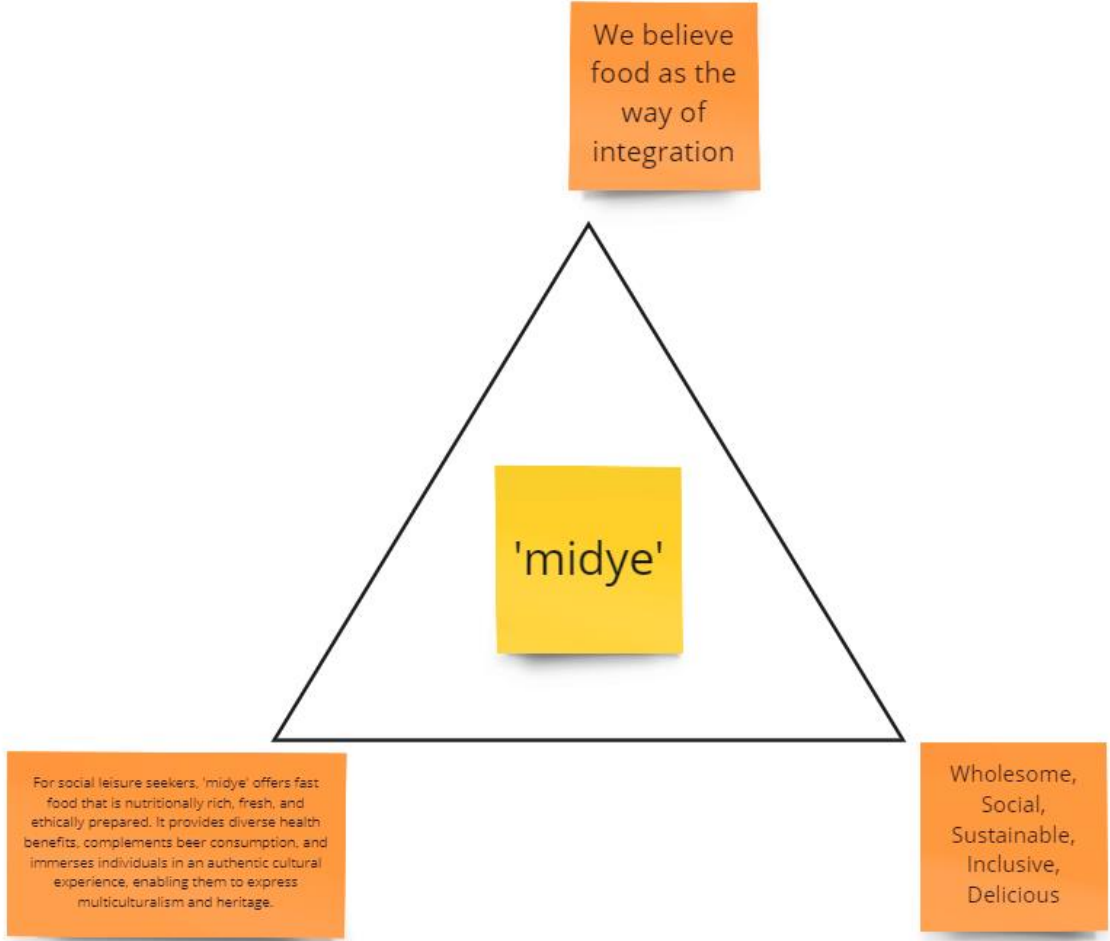
Wholesome, Social, Sustainable, Inclusive, Delicious

Figure 14: The brand DNA of 'midye'

iii. Rationale for the brand

The brand's purpose, encapsulated in the statement "we believe food as the way of integration," holds significant weight. Prior to embarking on this project, the driving motivation was to seek a means of fostering integration, rather than solely contemplating the possibilities within the realm of food. Through thorough deliberation, it was recognized that food represents the only avenue for dominant Islamic individuals to partake in secular European culture. Therefore, effecting a revolution within this sector can make a substantial contribution to the prevailing integration challenges, particularly evident in Den Haag. This purpose aligns with the objective of bolstering the secular presence of Turkish people in the Netherlands. As expounded upon in the design goal chapter and subsequent discussions, secular Turkish culture can play an indispensable role in bridging the gap between conservative Islamic culture and secular European culture.

The inclusion of 'midye dolma,' an age-old Turkish recipe that has traditionally established itself as an ideal drink companion and an integral component of nightlife in Turkey, serves as a powerful representation of secular Turkish culture. Given the aspiration to integrate diverse cultures, the brand's DNA places central emphasis on diversity and inclusion. This extends beyond cultural diversity, encompassing a broad spectrum of attractions such as ethical practices, environmental stewardship, exceptional nutritional value, and delightful flavors. In essence, the brand's DNA is marked by versatility, embracing and appealing to diverse consumer segments including vegans, those seeking an authentic experience, individuals desiring a quick snack alongside their beer, those who prioritize the nutritional content of their food, and more.

c. Visual Brand Identity
    i. Brand logo and advertisement poster

Figure 15: Advertisement poster highlighting the brand personality of delicious, sustainable, wholesome. The base image and the bucket are separately generated with Midjourney AI and edited afterwards.

As depicted in the poster, a diverse group of individuals is portrayed enjoying a drink together in a charming Dutch-style backyard setting. Their expressions convey happiness and a shared moment of enjoyment, complemented by a generous bucket of 'midye' as their chosen companion. Positioned at the bottom of the poster, the messaging emphasizes the delightful, environmentally conscious, and healthful aspects of the brand, conveyed through concise 3- and 30-second messages. The color palette employed is intentionally vibrant, reflecting the values of diversity and inclusion. These color choices are also echoed in the logo, featuring hex codes #ff0000, #e88f24, #ead886, #98b14d, #4d9141, and #313946. The selection of this palette ensures a harmonious combination that aligns with the desired messages of diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the appropriate green hue is used to communicate sustainability, while the right shade of red is employed to evoke appetite. The distribution of colors on the logo is carefully considered, following the visual principles of Gestalt, to ensure optimal visual attraction.

The visual brand identity adopts the 'Franklin Gothic Medium' font available in Adobe Illustrator. Its clean, modern, and versatile design harmonizes well with the brand's DNA.

The logo serves as a clear representation of the brand's purpose and reflects its core DNA. The name 'midye' is distinctly Turkish, instantly establishing its Turkish origins and connecting with individuals of Turkish background, thereby representing their cultural heritage. The inclusion of a lemon in the logo signifies freshness, a crucial attribute associated with mussels, and also pays homage to the traditional method of serving 'midye.' Earlier research revealed that, together with the Turkish flag and the Islamic symbol, the heart symbol was the most frequently chosen element. Hence, the background heart shape draws inspiration from this finding. This also reflects the Turkish hospitality. The different colors of the beers subtly speak the diversity message with the common Dutch glasses. Additionally, a clinking beer figure symbolizes the sociable personality of the logo while also referencing Dutch drinking culture, effectively appealing to individuals seeking social leisure. This insight stems from demand research, which revealed that half of the Dutch market consumes fast food during a night out. The green elements in the logo symbolize the brand's commitment to the environment and its emphasis on healthfulness. Positioned at the center of the logo, the depiction of mussels makes it unmistakably clear that the brand specializes in their sale.

The logo underwent multiple iterations, evaluations, and validations, incorporating feedback from supervisors, consumers, an expert graphic designer, a restaurant owner, and peers. This journey is detailed extensively in the chapter titled "Possible Strengths and Weaknesses of the Designed Logo."

7. Commercialization

Following the branding phase, the subsequent stage entails commercialization, encompassing meticulous market entry planning and development. This pivotal chapter involves defining the launch strategy, meticulously outlining the customer conversion journey, shaping touch points, devising media planning, calculating costs, and constructing a well-structured sales funnel. Concluding this phase, a compelling commercial video is crafted, effectively conveying the key message of the commercialization process. This comprehensive planning framework serves as the primary guiding force, ensuring the successful execution of the project.

a. Launch Strategy

The cornerstone of the Launch Strategy lies in the meticulous definition of the key message. This pivotal message serves as the central theme permeating through all facets of the commercialization activities, effectively reaching and resonating with the target audience. Its strategic formulation is of utmost importance, ensuring its alignment with the overarching purpose and seamlessly integrating with the brand's DNA.

i. Launch concept
1. Key message: 'come whoever you are'

'Come whoever you are' is a profound statement attributed to Rumi, a revered 13th-century mystic poet whose works have garnered immense popularity in the United States. His teachings have had a profound impact on the Ottoman Empire, and they continue to be held in high regard by the conservative Islamic community. Rumi stands as one of the most esteemed religious figures in Turkish culture, boasting a significant following.

The phrase 'come whoever you are' holds deep significance in Turkish society and has become widely recognized. Its selection as the key message stems from the contextual research, which revealed discriminatory behaviors within certain Turkish restaurants. These behaviors ranged from direct reactions toward sexual minorities to indirect disregard for non-Turkish customers. By embracing inclusivity and diversity, this wise and compassionate phrase aligns harmoniously with the brand's DNA.

Moreover, 'come whoever you are' represents more than just a popular quotation. It serves as a powerful embodiment of an open invitation, inviting individuals from all walks of life to gather together. This message carries profound implications, as it counters discrimination and celebrates the value of acceptance and unity.

By incorporating Rumi's words into the key message of the commercialization, the aim is to inspire a culture of inclusivity within Turkish restaurants, fostering an environment that embraces diversity and ensures every individual feels welcome. This aligns with the brand's commitment to creating an inclusive and enriching experience that transcends boundaries and fosters a sense of belonging for all patrons.

2. Niche markets

When formulating a strategic approach, it is essential to prioritize specific customer segments that offer a distinct advantage, as it is impractical to instantly reach all target segments. While the ultimate objective is to attract young individuals from a conservative Turkish background and the broader social leisure-seeking population, capturing their attention initially presents challenges. Consequently, three niche markets have been identified for initial focus: nutrition enthusiasts, discerning vegans, and culinary enthusiasts.

During the early stages of commercialization, emphasis will be placed on catering to these specific customer segments. The communication strategy will highlight the nutritional value of midye, addressing the environmental and ethical concerns of vegans, and promoting its exceptional taste. By emphasizing these aspects, the aim is to effectively engage these niche markets and pique their interest in the brand.

Recognizing the importance of attracting these customer segments, the marketing efforts will revolve around conveying the health benefits associated with midye, showcasing its compatibility with vegan dietary preferences, and positioning it as a delectable culinary offering. By tailoring the messaging to resonate with the unique needs and preferences of each segment, the brand seeks to establish a strong connection and appeal to their distinct interests.

It is important to note that while these niche markets are prioritized initially, the broader target segments of young individuals from a conservative Turkish background and social leisure seekers remain the long-term objectives. However, by focusing on the nutrition enthusiasts, discerning vegans, and culinary enthusiasts during the initial steps of commercialization, the brand aims to build a strong foundation and generate momentum that will pave the way for future success in capturing the attention and loyalty of the broader target audience.

Persona 1: Ayşe, the Conservative Turkish Background Individual

Background:

Ayşe is a 22-year-old woman originally from a conservative Turkish background. She was born in the Netherlands but has struggled to integrate into the secular European culture. Ayşe holds onto her traditional values and customs and seeks familiarity in her surroundings. She resides in Den Haag, a city with a significant Turkish community, where she feels a sense of comfort due to the presence of Turkish culture.

Characteristics:

1. Cultural Familiarity: Ayşe seeks options and experiences that resonate with her Turkish background. She prefers establishments that offer traditional Turkish cuisine and ambiance, as they provide a sense of belonging and familiarity.

2. Language Preference: Ayşe primarily communicates in Turkish and feels more comfortable interacting with others who can understand and speak her native language.

3. Limited Integration: Due to the challenges she has faced in integrating into the Dutch society, Ayşe tends to socialize within the Turkish community. She appreciates spaces where she can connect with individuals who share her values, traditions, and religious beliefs.

4. Food Preferences: Ayşe enjoys home-cooked Turkish meals and appreciates the use of traditional ingredients and flavors. She seeks out restaurants that offer authentic Turkish dishes, including her favorite traditional Turkish dessert, baklava.

Goals and Needs:

1. Cultural Connection: Ayşe yearns for opportunities to connect with her Turkish culture and community. She seeks spaces where she can engage in Turkish traditions, events, and social gatherings.

2. Comfort and Familiarity: Ayşe seeks environments that make her feel at ease and provide a sense of familiarity. She values establishments that embrace Turkish hospitality and create a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

3. Accessibility: Ayşe prefers locations that are easily accessible, preferably within the Turkish community in Den Haag. This allows her to navigate her surroundings comfortably and connect with others who share her background.

Persona 2: Mark, the Dutch Beer-Enthusiast and Vegetarian Fitness Enthusiast

Background:

Mark is a 35-year-old Dutch man who lives in Den Haag. He has a passion for beer and enjoys exploring different varieties and flavors. Mark follows a vegetarian diet and focuses on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. He regularly works out and is interested in finding alternative protein sources to support his fitness goals.

Characteristics:

1. Beer Enthusiast: Mark enjoys the experience of trying different types of beer. He appreciates the diverse flavors and the social aspect of visiting breweries and beer festivals.

2. Vegetarian Diet: Mark follows a vegetarian diet, avoiding meat and fish. He prefers plant-based food options and is conscious of incorporating enough protein into his meals.

3. Convenience: As a busy individual, Mark looks for convenient food options that fit his lifestyle. He enjoys snacks that are easy to grab on-the-go or prepare quickly.

4. Fitness and Protein: Mark is committed to his fitness routine and wants to ensure he meets his protein requirements. He is open to exploring alternative protein sources beyond traditional meat and fish options.

Goals and Needs:

1. Beer Exploration: Mark seeks opportunities to discover and learn more about different types of beer. He wants to find breweries, beer bars, and events in Den Haag that offer a wide selection of craft beers.

2. Vegetarian Protein Sources: Mark is interested in identifying plant-based protein options that can supplement his vegetarian diet and support his workout regimen.

3. Convenient Snacks: Mark is looking for convenient and tasty snack options that align with his vegetarian lifestyle and provide the necessary nutrients for his active lifestyle.

4. Fitness Community: Mark wishes to connect with like-minded individuals who are interested in fitness, nutrition, and vegetarianism. He seeks spaces or groups that foster discussion, share advice, and promote a healthy lifestyle.

     iii. Daily routine

Taking into consideration the second persona crafted specifically for the targeted niche market, a meticulously devised daily regimen has been formulated to identify the key touchpoints (see Figure 16).

1. Morning:

 - 7:00 AM: Wake up and start the day.

 - 7:30 AM: Check social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube to catch up on the latest beer trends, fitness tips, and vegetarian recipes. He encounters the new midye advertisement on YouTube.

 - 8:00 AM: Prepare a protein-rich vegetarian breakfast at home, incorporating ingredients like tofu, beans, or yogurt.

 - 9:30 AM: Head to the train station and take a train to the city center of Den Haag. In the train station he sees the midye posters placed on the stops.

 2. Afternoon:

 - 10:00 AM: Started to work without losing any time, because they are in a tight schedule.

 - 12:30 AM: Go out to the city center of Den Haag for lunch time, has a protein-packed vegetarian lunch, either at a nearby vegetarian-friendly restaurant or by bringing a packed meal from home. He walks around at the center and visits some parfum stores as well. He notices the midye advertisements.

 - 2:00 PM: Back to the work till it ends.

5. Evening:

 - 5:00 PM: Go to the gym for a workout session, focusing on strength training and cardio exercises to maintain fitness and build muscle. The midye advertisements grasps his attention again.

 - 6:00 PM: Return to the city center and visit a music festival or concert happening in Den Haag, enjoying live music and the vibrant atmosphere.

 - 8:00 PM: Grab dinner at 'midye' food truck near the festival venue, enjoying delicious midye while immersing himself in the festival experience.

 - 8:30 AM: Head to the train station and take a train to home. See the midye bus stop ads and smile. This time he scans the QR code on add and visit the midye website to learn more about it.

 - 9:00 PM: Wind down by watching a beer-related documentary or fitness vlog on YouTube, gathering inspiration and ideas for future beer tastings or workout routines.

 - 10:00 PM: Prepare for bed, ensuring a good night's sleep for optimal recovery and energy for the next day.
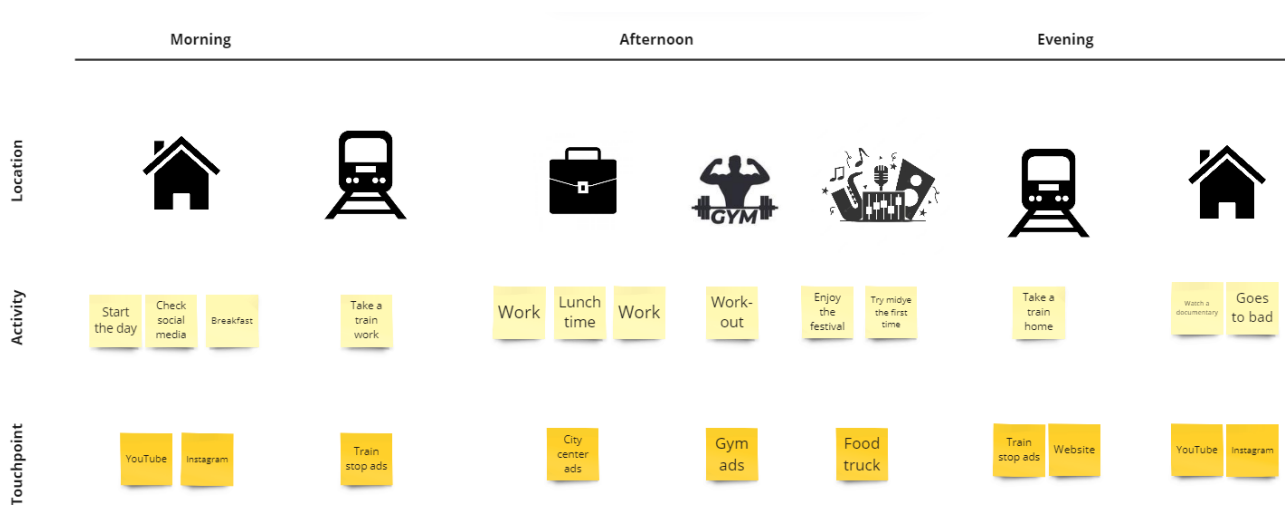
	Morning		Afternoon			Evening	
Location	🏠	🚆	💼	GYM	🎵	🚆	🏠
Activity	Start the day · Check social media · Breakfast	Take a train work	Work · Lunch time · Work	Work-out	Enjoy the festival · Try midye the first time	Take a train home	Watch a documentary · Goes to bad
Touchpoint	YouTube · Instagram	Train stop ads	City center ads	Gym ads	Food truck	Train stop ads · Website	YouTube · Instagram

Figure 16: Daily routine of the second persona.

> b. Touch Points

Allocating a reasonable marketing budget of €50,000, a comprehensive analysis has identified a strategic framework comprising seven key touchpoints. These touchpoints encompass a balanced blend of online channels, along with a carefully positioned series of poster advertisements in high-traffic locales. Furthermore, a strategically positioned food truck has been incorporated to facilitate initial sales of midye during festivals and social gatherings, thus amplifying brand exposure and market penetration.

> i. Online touchpoints; Instagram, YouTube, website

The inclusion of online touchpoints, such as Instagram posts, YouTube advertisements, and a dedicated brand website, holds paramount importance in expanding the brand's reach and visibility, cultivating brand awareness and recognition, fostering connections and engagement with the target audience, showcasing promotions, gathering real-time customer feedback and market insights, and amplifying the commercial campaign.

Given the specific niche market comprising vegetarians and nutrition seekers, predominantly young individuals who are avid users of social media, it becomes imperative for the brand to establish a robust online presence. In this regard, Instagram assumes a significance, with a strategic focus on collaborating with micro and mid-tier Instagram influencers possessing a highly targeted follower base interested in health and sustainability. Leveraging their expertise and influence, these influencers are poised to augment the acceptance rate of the novel midye fast-food offering. Embracing the hashtag #midye_comewhoeveryouare, the brand seeks to foster an online community, driving follower growth and stimulating active engagement, encouraging individuals to share their experiences with midye.

Furthermore, YouTube, known for captivating users during extended mobile viewing sessions, presents an opportune platform. A meticulously crafted 30-second commercial video has been developed, exclusively targeting content related to health and sustainability, effectively disseminating the brand's key message (see chapter e: Commercial Video).

The brand's website serves as an informative platform where comprehensive details about midye are provided, including an in-depth exploration of its health benefits, environmental friendliness, origin, and production process, among other relevant information. The website features engaging promotional videos and captivating imagery to visually showcase the unique attributes of the brand. Additionally, it offers convenient access to locate sales points where customers can conveniently indulge in this exceptional fast-food experience.

For an immersive browsing experience, interested individuals can seamlessly visit the website by scanning the barcode depicted in Figure 17, granting them direct access to a wealth of knowledge and captivating visual content related to midye. By capitalizing on these online touchpoints, the brand aims to maximize its digital presence, resonate with the target audience, and establish a strong foothold within the niche market.

Figure 17: QR code for the midye website

City center, train stops, campus and gym advertisements

The central district of Den Haag serves as a magnet, attracting individuals from neighboring regions, various parts of the country, and even tourists from abroad. Renowned for its vibrant atmosphere and bustling energy, this area captivates people for a multitude of reasons. As visitors explore the vicinity, they actively seek food options to satisfy their appetite, be it for lunch, dinner, or accompanying their beverages. Consequently, it becomes imperative for our brand to establish a prominent presence within the heart of Den Haag, particularly in proximity to central train stations. This strategic positioning ensures heightened visibility, capturing the attention of individuals actively in search of novel culinary experiences (refer to figures 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22).

Considering our target niche market, university campuses represent an invaluable opportunity. These academic environments are teeming with environmentally conscious individuals, making it essential for us to have a notable presence. By emphasizing that mussels have a lower environmental impact compared to vegetable cultivation, we seize the chance to resonate with this demographic. Consequently, we have strategically established ourselves within university campuses, aiming to raise awareness and appeal to the environmentally concerned (see figure 23).

In addition to universities, gym centers serve as another prime location to target. Health-conscious individuals frequent these facilities, displaying a heightened level of attentiveness toward the nutritional value of their dietary choices. Capitalizing on this opportunity, we have strategically placed posters in these locations, showcasing the nutritional benefits of mussels alongside our key messaging (see figures 24 and 25).

By tactically positioning ourselves in these locations, we maximize our brand's visibility, ensuring that our messaging reaches the intended target audience while aligning with their demands and preferences.

Figure 18: City center advertisement poster 1   Figure 19: City center advertisement poster 2

Figure 20: City center advertisement poster 3

Figure 21: Train stop advertisement poster 1

Figure 22: Train stop advertisement poster 2

Figure 23: University campus advertisement

Figure 24: Gym center advertisement poster 1   Figure 25: Gym center advertisement poster 2

The backgrounds and the base of the posters in Figure 18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25 are generated with Midjourney AI and edited afterwards.

iii.   Food truck on social gatherings and festivals

To comprehensively reach the niche market, the inclusion of a food truck represents the final touchpoint strategically designed to engage with individuals during open social gatherings, music festivals, and food festivals (see figure 26). These dynamic settings present optimal opportunities to connect with individuals who possess an adventurous palate and exhibit a keen interest in exploring new culinary experiences. Moreover, these locations serve as ideal platforms to communicate messages of inclusivity and diversity, reflecting our brand's commitment. The design of the food truck reflects the key message of the campaign.

As part of the food truck strategy, a key approach involves offering complimentary samples to attendees. This gesture aims to create a sense of excitement and entice potential customers, fostering enthusiasm and a willingness to make future purchases. By providing individuals with a taste of our offerings, we can effectively showcase the distinctiveness and appeal of midye, ultimately encouraging repeat patronage and loyalty.

The food truck initiative serves as a dynamic and mobile extension of our brand, strategically positioned to captivate the attention of the target audience within vibrant social gatherings. Through this approach, we aim to cultivate a positive and lasting impression, establishing a strong presence within the niche market by spreading the message 'come whoever you are'.

Figure 26: Midye fast-food truck on a music festival. The image is generated with Midjourney AI. The logo and the texts are added afterwards.

c. Media Planning and Costs

This chapter provides comprehensive and detailed explanations of various marketing activities, encompassing aspects such as timing, frequency, costs, audience reach, and conversion rates. By delving into these activities, readers will gain a deeper understanding of their interconnections and their contributions to the overall marketing strategy, ultimately leading to the development of a robust sales funnel.

To generate initial brand awareness, a series of six YouTube advertisements will be launched during the first week of each month. These efforts will be complemented by street posters during the subsequent week. In the first week of the new year, both posters and advertisements will run simultaneously, aiming to capture maximum attention and stimulate the audience to include midye in their new year resolutions. The budget allocated for the YouTube ads totals 13,500 euros.

In conjunction with the strategically located spots in Den Haag city center, Den Haag Central, and Den Haag HS train stations, poster advertisements will be displayed in 40 different locations during the second week of each month, complementing the previous week's YouTube advertisements. The publication cost is estimated at 9,100 euros, while printing costs total 1,700 euros, resulting in a combined expenditure of 10,800 euros.

Additionally, six bi-weekly food truck festivals are planned during the warm season in August, September, and October 2023. These events will provide an opportunity to offer free samples of midye to festival visitors. The total expenditure, including truck rental, festival attendance fees, and the cost of free samples, amounts to 7,493 euros.

A collaboration with 14 micro-influencers, each having around 15,000 followers, is planned. The cost of one post per month per influencer is approximately 100 euros, resulting in a total cost of 8,400 euros over a six-month period. This marketing activity demonstrates the highest short-term profitability ratio, with a figure of 0.15 (number of purchases divided by total cost). Therefore, an additional collaboration with three mid-influencers, each having a minimum of 100,000 followers, is also planned. The cost of one post per month per mid-influencer is 500 euros, resulting in a total cost of 9,000 euros over the six-month period.

The total cost of the media planning adds up to 49.200 euros. Note that, this is not immediately profitable. It is rather to create brand awareness and enhance the customer based brand equity.
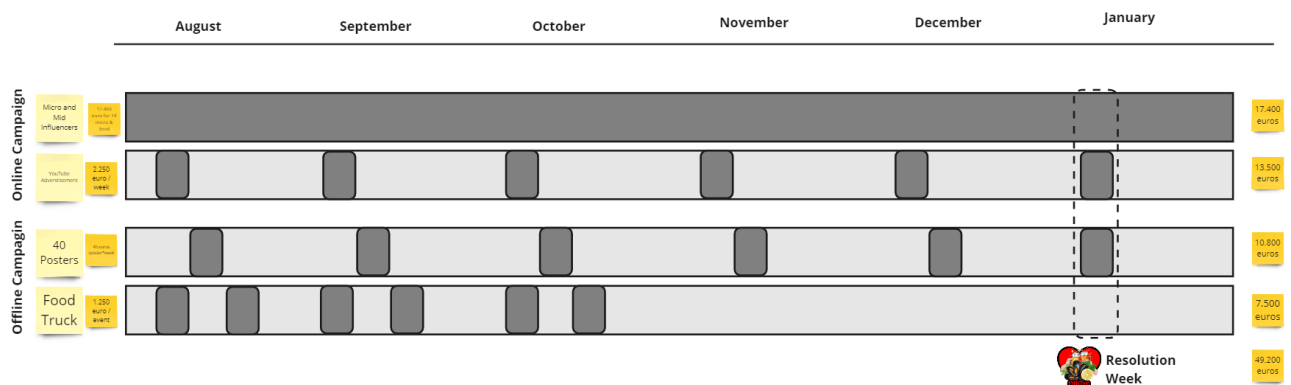

Figure 27: Media planning and cost structure of 49.200 euros in total.

d. Customer Conversion Journey and Funnel

With YouTube Ads reaching 300,000 people with the opportunity to see (OTS) at the end of the campaign, approximately half of them, 150,000 individuals, are estimated to gain awareness about the brand (VAC). Not all individuals who are aware of the brand will consider making a purchase. Research suggests that the consideration rate for online ads can range from 20% to 25% (Leadpages, 2023). Assuming a conservative consideration rate of 20%, we estimate that 30,000 individuals will consider purchasing. Additionally, based on industry data (Flick, 2022), approximately 5% of the individuals who consider the brand will click on the ads, resulting in 1,500 intending consumers. The number of individuals who actually make a purchase can vary based on factors such as pricing, availability, and individual preferences. Assuming a conservative conversion rate of 25% (because it assumes a relatively moderate estimate for the percentage of individuals who consider the brand and then proceed to make a purchase), we estimate that approximately 375 customers will make a purchase. Moreover, a loyalty rate of 7.5% (Kim, 2021) indicates that approximately 28 customers will become loyal to the brand.

The train station and city center poster advertisements have the potential to reach a total of 12 million people at the end of the campaign (NS, 2023), meaning 6 million potential exposures, 3 million OTS, and 500,000 VAC (Awareness). The consideration-intent ratio has been set at 20% (Leadpages, 2023), leading to an estimated 1,000 people considering a purchase. The purchase-loyalty ratio is set at 5% due to the less targeted nature of this activity compared to other touch points. Therefore, approximately 50 customers are expected to become loyal.

With food trucks, the aim is to reach 30,000 people with potential exposure, 27,000 people with OTS, and 24,300 people with eye contact with the stand (VAC) or awareness of the campaign. The consideration and intent ratio are estimated to be 40%, leading to an estimated 388 people considering a purchase. Given that this is an onsite activity with direct contact and openness to trying new food products, the purchase and loyalty ratio is set at 10%. As a result, approximately 39 customers are expected to become loyal.

Collaborating with 14 micro-influencers is anticipated to reach approximately 210,000 people, generating an estimated 189,000 verified ad completions (VAC). A consideration-intent ratio of 30% has been applied to gauge the proportion of individuals likely to consider making a purchase. The purchase-loyalty ratio has been conservatively set at 7.5%, representing the projected percentage of customers expected to exhibit brand loyalty. Based on these ratios, the campaign is estimated to result in 1,276 purchases and foster a loyal customer base of approximately 96 individuals. The collaboration with 3 mid-influencers targets approximately 300,000 people, with an estimated 270,000 verified ad completions (VAC). Applying the same ratios as for micro-influencers, the expected results are around 1,823 purchases and a loyal customer base of 137 individuals. The short-term profitability ratio for mid-influencers is 0.2, affirming the Forbes' research conducted by Mathew in 2018.

At the end of the campaign, it is estimated that the brand will gain awareness among approximately 1,113,300 people. Out of these, approximately 277,420 individuals are expected to consider the brand, while 66,798 intend to make a purchase. The projected number of actual purchases is 4,862, and approximately 350 individuals are expected to become loyal customers (see Figure 28).
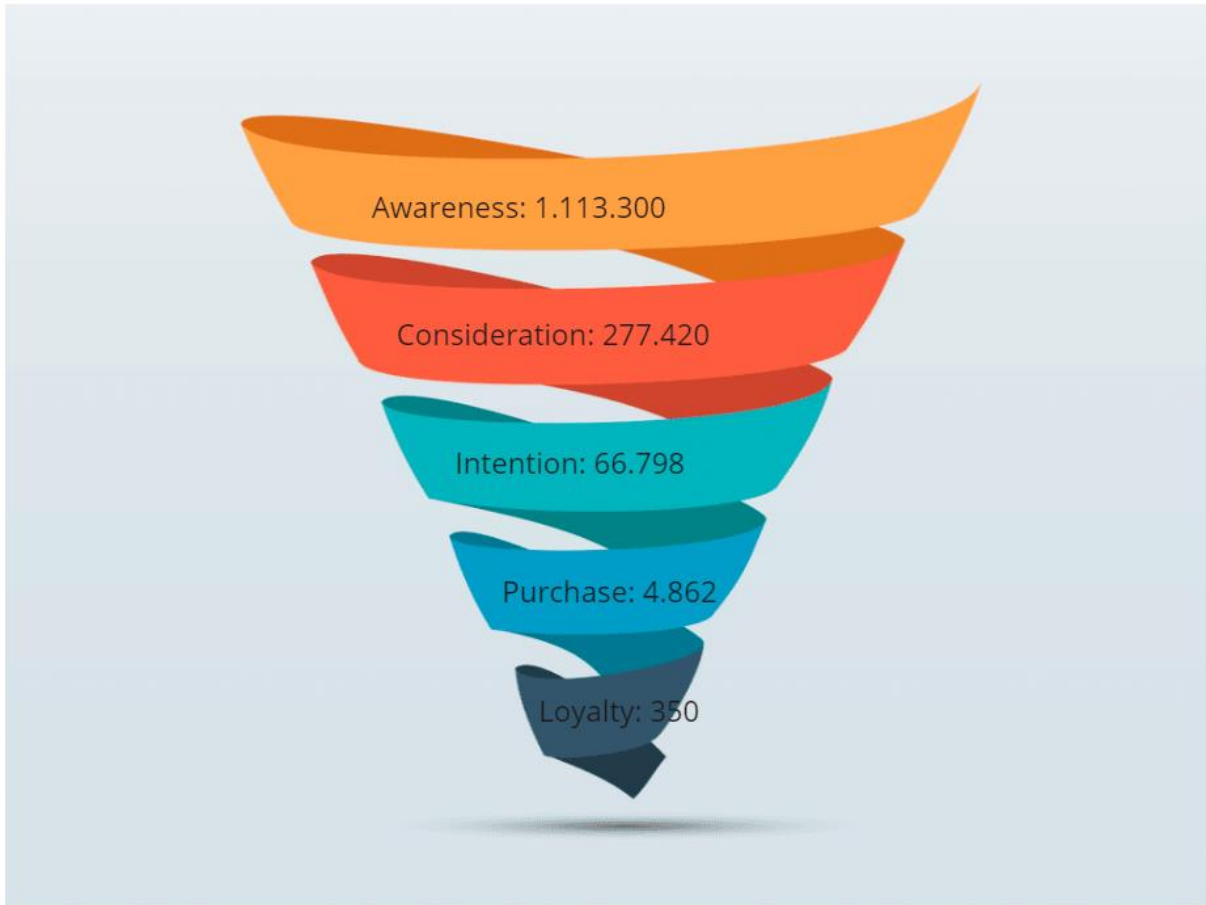
Figure 28: Funnel represents the total number of customers for each step of 'The Buyer Journey' (Edwards Media Solutions, 2021)

e. Commercial Video: 30 Seconds to Convey the Key Message in YouTube Ad

A 33-seconds commercial video has been meticulously crafted to effectively communicate the key message of the campaign. The video showcases a diverse group of individuals with varying needs socializing together, ultimately deciding to order food. They choose "midye," and the video concludes with the slogan "come whoever you are," visually reinforced by a heart-shaped mussel resembling the logo. For your convenience, you can access the video on YouTube using the following link: [https://youtu.be/81w2Vo9VXtk].

8. Entrepreneurship in Action
    a. Intellectual Property Rights, Permissions, Pricing

Ensuring the safeguarding of the developed marketing strategy is of paramount importance as the initial step before launching the brand. To address this requirement, Michelle Nahumury from the Industrial Design faculty at TU Delft played a crucial role in providing invaluable assistance. She facilitated the establishment of a non-disclosure agreement that was to be signed by participating companies, thereby ensuring the confidentiality of project details. The agreements can be found in Appendix A7 for reference. Additionally, Michelle Nahumury offered valuable guidance on safeguarding trademarks, including the brand name, logo, and slogan. Moreover, collaboration was sought with TU Delft Campus to further support these protective measures.

To initiate the initial sales of midye, a food-truck activity is being organized within the TU Delft campus. The necessary permission from the campus regulatory body has been obtained to proceed with this endeavor. Additionally, following the mentor's advice, contact has been made with the ID Kafee board to secure the required permissions for a successful launch. Alternatively, the municipality of The Hague is contacted to carry out the same activity in the region of The Hague HS, targeting people from diverse backgrounds who pass by.

The pricing for a filled mussel is determined to be 0.80 cents. The plan is to sell them in portions of 5 for 4 euros, 10 for 7.5 euros, and 20 for 14 euros. According to the current producers of Midye Dolma, the average cost for a filled mussel is approximately 50 cents. The objective is not to set a substantial profit margin, especially for the initial launch, in order to attract the target market.

    b. Supporting Activities; Employee Wearables, Interior Design, Packaging

To bolster brand equity and cultivate customer loyalty, various activities have been implemented. Employee wearables featuring the brand logo (refer to Figure 29) have been produced to create a consistent and recognizable brand presence. In addition, a vibrant and inclusive menu design has been developed (see Figure 30) to convey a sense of diversity.

To enhance the interior design of the restaurants, a collaboration has been established with Yasemen Engin, an interior architect from TCONCEPT in Den Haag. Discussions with her have centered around aligning the interior design with the brand's purpose. Several concepts have been explored, including the implementation of a welcoming counter desk that opens to the outside (see Figure 31). The idea of a pub-like setting, where customers can gather around the counter desk, has also been considered. The interior design aims to strike a balance between an industrial aesthetic that communicates affordability and a colorful ambiance that reflects diversity and inclusivity (refer to Figures 32 and 33).

Furthermore, an innovative feature under discussion involves incorporating a 360-degree sink in the middle of the restaurant, enabling customers to conveniently wash their hands as midye dolma is typically consumed by hand. Branded napkins have also been developed for take-away orders (see Figure 34). As for gift packaging, a unique design (refer to Figure 35) has been crafted to enhance the overall experience of consuming midye dolma. Notably, a packaging concept has been submitted for consideration in the Young Designers Award 2023, specifically within the sustainable packaging category (refer to Figure 36). An application video showcasing the innovative packaging can be viewed on YouTube via the following link: [https://youtu.be/0zcXT792788].

Figure 29: Employee wearables   Figure 30: Restaurant menu

Figure 31: External counter desk   Figure 32: Interior counter desk

Figure 33: Interior design

Figure 34: Napkins

Figure 35: Gift packaging

Figure 36: Regular packaging

The base of the Figure 30,31,32,33,34,35 are generated with Midjourney AI and edited afterwards.

PHASE 4 – Evaluation

9. General Evaluation

Within the project, various design decisions and research outcomes emerged that warranted further support and initiatives. This chapter aims to elaborate on these evaluations and provide additional elements that bolster the design decisions and outcomes through various avenues.

a. Indication of the Potential Demand for 'Midye Dolma'

This research serves as a complementary study to the primary demand research conducted in Chapter 3, aiming to validate the findings of the initial research. The original demand research involved qualitative interviews with 11 individuals representing diverse demographics. To ensure the robustness of the findings, a quantitative research approach was adopted to corroborate the results. To access the online questionnaire for this research, please scan the barcode provided in Figure 37. The follow-up research included a total of 22 participants.

The results indicate that the majority of participants, consistent with the initial research, consume fast food at least once a week. Half of the participants reported consuming fast food during social outings with friends, slightly lower than the findings of the original research. Similarly, half of the participants expressed a desire for healthier fast-food options, echoing the sentiments expressed in the initial research. Notably, while the original research indicated that 10 out of 11 participants believed there could be more variety in the market, the follow-up research revealed that 63.6% of participants perceive the market as offering a wide range of fast-food options. For further details regarding this research, please refer to Appendix A8.

Figure 37: QR to the evaluation study of the market demand

b. Possible Strengths and Weaknesses of the Designed Logo

The design of the logo was given significant attention, recognizing its pivotal role in branding activities and the need for ensuring its quality. Several stakeholders were involved in the logo design process, including peers, the supervising team, a graphic designer, a restaurant owner undergoing logo redesign, and potential users. The objective was to evaluate how the audience perceives the logo and assess its effectiveness in conveying the intended message.

Initially, three fellow students enrolled in the branding course were consulted to gather initial insights and narrow down the diverse range of design possibilities and styles (refer to Figure 38). Their input played a crucial role in filtering out numerous options that are not presented in this report. Subsequently, two alternative logo designs were developed and compared on a semantic scale alongside the existing logo of 'Istanbul Midye' (see Figure 39) through user feedback. To participate in this research, please scan the QR code provided in Figure 40, and for the results, please refer to Appendix 9.

The findings of this comparison indicated that the logo on the right side of Figure 39 effectively communicates the intended messages, but certain drawbacks were identified. The supervising team pointed out that the glasses in this logo do not represent the typical Dutch glasses, which doesn't feature a handle (see Figure 41). Additionally, it was noted that the font used in the logo was not suitable and required modification. To gain further insights, professional graphic designer Yunus Altin was consulted to provide feedback on the three logos depicted in Figure 39.

According to Altin's assessment, the logo of Istanbul Midye clearly signifies its Turkish origin, but the mussel image is not distinct and fails to effectively communicate the brand's purpose and personality. However, overall, it is deemed a clean and comprehensive logo. Regarding the second logo in Figure 39, there is no indication that it represents a Turkish brand. The name 'aangeschoten mosselen' may potentially mislead individuals into assuming it contains alcohol as an ingredient. While it effectively communicates the brand's personality, improvements are needed in terms of comprehensiveness. For the logo on the right side of Figure 39, the graphic designer observed that it appears crowded and could benefit from a cleaner and more appropriate design.

In light of these valuable feedback, the final version of the logo was created (see Figure 42). It is worth noting that one possible criticism of the logo is its potential to deter Muslim individuals due to the presence of beer. However, it should be recognized that consuming beer with midye is a traditional Turkish practice. Turkish people, being aware of this cultural context, would understand that branding midye in this manner aligns with Dutch culture. To validate this hypothesis, the logo was shown to a Turkish individual with a strong Islamic background who operates a restaurant and is currently redesigning its logo. Without any prompting, the individual expressed that the logo is well-designed and has the potential to appeal to both Turkish and Dutch people.

Figure 38: Various initial styles for logo created with Midjourney AI.

Figure 39: Logo of 'Istanbul Midye' and two developed alternatives to compare on semantic scale. Second logo is created with Midjourney AI and edited afterwards. Some parts of the third logo is separately created with Midjourney AI and edited afterwards.

Figure 40: QR for the comparison.   Figure 41: Representing the custom Dutch beer glass.

Figure 42: The final logo of midye.

In light of our previous chapters on brand development and commercial activity for the launch campaign, it is prudent to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of our brand to ensure its alignment with the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model proposed by Keller (2001) and the integration of key brand authors as highlighted by Holt (2003).

Regarding brand salience, the incorporation of a heart shape in the logo's background serves to create a memorable visual identity for our brand. This design element effectively communicates a three-second message to the audience, enhancing their ability to recall the brand, midye, upon encountering it. It is worth considering a potential simplification of the logo in later stages, reducing it to solely feature the heart shape, contingent upon the brand's growing popularity. This topic has been discussed extensively with the supervising team. If the brand is strong, a simple logo would suffice, following the example of companies like Shell that have simplified their logo as their brand grew stronger. Conversely, if the brand is new or lacks sufficient strength, it may be prudent to consider a more descriptive logo. It is important to acknowledge that simplicity in logo design generally enhances recognition and memorability. The brand name itself is straightforward and easily memorable, incorporating the term "mid," which evokes connotations of "middle" and "meeting in a middle ground," addressing the concept of integration. Furthermore, the diverse color palette employed in the logo evokes the LGBTQ2+ flag, thereby aligning our brand with the values of diversity and inclusion.

In terms of performance and imagery, our brand promises a diverse range of benefits to the user, spanning functional and emotional advantages. Through our launch campaign, we effectively communicate that Midye is a healthy, environmentally friendly, and delicious option. These messages are consistently reiterated across various touchpoints to effectively target our niche market through different means. The market positioning of Midye as a nutritious drink companion is emphasized as a unique selling point, given the absence of significant competitors in this particular area.

Concerning meaning, the brand's purpose and personality revolve around the values of integration, inclusivity, and social connectivity. These principles form the core of our brand and guide our commercialization efforts, as evidenced by our choice of colors, the key message "come whoever you are," advertising posters featuring diverse groups of people, and the logo design symbolizing joyful social gatherings, among other elements. Resonance represents the pinnacle of our brand's purpose, reflecting our ultimate goal of cultivating a robust, loyal, and engaged customer base that experiences a genuinely welcoming atmosphere, establishing deep connections and emotional bonds that resonate with them. To achieve this level of resonance, the brand's meaning should permeate every detail, ranging from employee wearables to packaging choices.

Beyond our own initiatives in building this brand, it is important to acknowledge that other stakeholders, including influencers, users, and popular culture, also contribute to its formation, as Holt (2003) suggests. Incorporating micro and mid-level influencers in our commercial campaign will significantly enhance our brand equity. Consumers will be encouraged to create posts featuring the hashtag #midye_comewhoeveryouare on Instagram, while also utilizing buckets adorned with the midye logo when carrying their orders, thereby promoting the brand as they move about city centers. Additionally, a YouTube commercial video will enable us to reach a wide audience of consumers, further bolstering the shared meaning associated with our brand.

d. View of Delft Food & Eating Design Lab in TU Delft on 'midye'

The Delft Food & Eating Design Lab specializes in research related to the subject matter of this project. Over time, the project's direction has increasingly aligned with the lab's research interests. For instance, the lab explores ways to reduce animal consumption and examines the impact of food shaming stickers on consumers (2023). These stickers raise awareness about animal suffering, associated health risks, and the environmental damage caused by meat consumption. As mussels have a lower environmental footprint compared to vegetable farming, they serve as an environmentally friendly alternative source of protein. Moreover, scientists argue that mussels, lacking a centralized nervous system, may not experience pain in the same way as other animals do.

Likewise, the commercialization campaign emphasizes the nutritional value of mussels, highlighting their rich content of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, making them a nutritious food choice. Rick Schifferstein, the director of the Delft Food & Design Lab, recognizes the potential of this brand to support their mission due to its versatile properties. He also emphasizes the brand's integration aspect, noting that it can create a positive social ritual around the consumption of midye. We have been in contact with him to explore further collaboration opportunities in the future.

e. Evaluation by Entrepreneurship in Action, Understanding the Possible Impact of 'midye'

One of the key indicators of brand success lies in the ability to generate customer purchases, as it serves as tangible evidence of capturing and retaining consumer interest. The brand targets two distinct markets: Turkish background Dutch citizens with a conservative Islamic culture, and the general international Dutch market. Different strategies have been implemented for each market, as discussed in previous chapters. To evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies, a strategically chosen location was selected to reach both target segments simultaneously. This approach enables a comprehensive assessment of the decisions made thus far.

The chosen location, situated in front of Den Haag HS station, is a vibrant neighborhood characterized by a diverse range of ethnicities and backgrounds, including a significant number of individuals with Turkish heritage. On the 27th of June 2023, a dedicated counter was set up in collaboration with surrounding restaurants, allowing for direct interaction with the target audience. Turkish individuals readily recognized the brand and expressed interest, inquiring about further details and making purchases using the provided QR code (see Appendix 10).

During conversations with customers, it became apparent that some individuals refrain from consuming alcohol due to religious beliefs, yet they still showed enthusiasm in joining the crowd and engaging with the brand. This positive response signifies the brand's success in promoting integration and inclusivity. Notably, not only Turkish individuals but also people from diverse backgrounds expressed curiosity and actively participated in learning about the brand and enjoying the midye dolma experience (see Figure 43).

Figure 43: Entrepreneurship in Action

10. Reflection on the Project Process

The project aligns with several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to climate action, health promotion, diversity and inclusion, and economic growth. It emphasizes the significance of culture-sensitive branding, an area that has received limited scholarly attention thus far. By integrating a comprehensive cultural study with circuit of culture analysis, this project introduces an innovative strategy for developing culture-sensitive branding.

The research phase of the project encompasses a broad and in-depth scientific spectrum, delving into a complex cultural context. It incorporates qualitative and quantitative market research, supplemented by desk research to establish a strong foundation for the project's design goal. The research not only gathers information on customer behaviors but also explores competition and trends within the market.

During the design phase, all the findings are synthesized to generate a creative solution. The project primarily focuses on the contextual level rather than intricate details. As a result, it is not a fully finalized project in terms of detailing and may require further iterations for implementation. While the project primarily addresses the "why" question, it defines the "how" question at an executive level. The project's idea and message are iterated and developed, with the details and finishings aligning with the overarching vision.

It is essential to be mindful of the outcomes generated by the project. By defining certain details clearly while leaving room for further development, it provides flexibility for other departments, such as graphic designers, to understand the guidelines and confidently iterate on the less defined aspects.

Overall, the project ensures that it addresses the right objectives; however, there is room for improvement in terms of executing the project with greater precision and attention to detail.

11. Recommendations for Further Development

"midye" serves as a proposed strategy and direction, rather than a definitive solution, exemplifying the design goal at hand. It is essential to consider multiple proposals and examples that align with the design goal. Within this context, the secular Turkish culture can serve as an intermediate step towards the healthy integration of individuals with Turkish backgrounds into Dutch society. Accordingly, it is recommended to promote the secular Turkish culture strategically, aiming to enhance the secular Turkish identity in Den Haag. It would be advantageous to implement a government policy aimed at fostering the strategic promotion of secular Turkish culture among the Turkish community in the Netherlands. This promotion can take various forms, including culinary endeavors, sports, music, and more.

For instance, organizing an annual beach club festival initiated by secular Turkish individuals and gaining visibility on Dutch television, effectively promoting Turkish background DJs, generating excitement and interest among the younger generation. Additionally, utilizing social media platforms to promote ancient Turkic religions (which do not conflict with secular European culture, similar to Buddhism) can influence and engage young people. Another approach involves creating a fashion trend for women that incorporates traditional Turkish motifs while adhering to European dress codes. These examples are by no means exhaustive and can be tailored to suit specific circumstances and preferences.

During the design phase of the project, significant emphasis is placed on the branding's purpose and the messaging of the commercialization campaign. However, it is important to note that there is room for improvement in terms of graphic design quality and attention to fine detailing. While certain aspects have been addressed, there is still potential for further enhancement in this area.

In order to strengthen the brand equity of midye and capitalize on its potential as a drink companion, strategic partnerships with established Dutch beer brands could be explored. Collaborating with renowned beer brands such as Heineken, Grolsch, Amstel, Hertog Jan, or Brand could provide valuable opportunities for synergistic growth. By aligning with these well-known beer brands, midye would benefit from their brand recognition, distribution networks, and consumer loyalty. This strategic partnership would further emphasize midye's appeal as a complementary choice to accompany beer consumption, creating a mutually beneficial relationship for both parties involved.

Discussion

Today, groundbreaking and revolutionary developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies are shaping the future of our species like never before. However, in March 2023, over a thousand leading scientists urgently called for a six-month pause in AI development, highlighting the profound risks it poses to society and humanity (ODSC Team, 2023). In a world plagued by conflicts, it is crucial that we establish a common understanding of controversial subjects (such as superintelligence, ethics, autonomous weapons) before we unleash something as powerful as AGI. Major conflicts between the Western World, Russia, China, and India underscore the need for a shared perspective on the future of humanity in order to continue our ambitious journey. This necessitates a united world culture, making cultural integration an essential and pressing issue.

One of the most challenging aspects of cultural integration lies in bridging the gap between Western and Middle Eastern cultures, given their significant differences in belief systems, social norms, and values. For instance, the acceptance of refugees by Europe after the wars in Syria and Ukraine highlighted the relative ease of integrating with Ukrainian refugees compared to the complexities faced in integrating with Muslim populations who assign different gender roles, different political ideology, and desire public regulations that effects all (such as 'adhan'). These religious practices pose challenges to coexistence and require careful consideration. The tension between two distinct cultures is particularly pronounced in Turkey, where geographically and historically, Western and Middle Eastern cultures converge. A notable example is the differing approaches to the 'adhan' issue. In 1931, secular Turks changed the call for prayer from Arabic to Turkish as a peaceful step towards coexistence. However, in 1950, conservative Muslims reverted it back to Arabic, reflecting their sensitivity and commitment to their practices. This interplay between secularism and Islamofascism also manifested in neighboring Iran through the 1979 revolution, setting the stage for today's humanitarian crises in the region. While Turkey is a secular country by constitution, there is a growing strength in the Islamofascism movement, presenting a challenge to secularism each passing year. This complex interplay between secularism and Islamofascism has given rise to cultural practices that have become iconic symbols of a particular lifestyle for both sides throughout the history. The appropriation and expansion of these symbols can be seen as silent yet powerful and effective protests.

A similar integration challenge exists, albeit to a lesser extent, in Dutch society. Despite Turkish-background individuals arriving in the Netherlands as early as the 1960s, the majority still hold onto their distinct lifestyle within tightly-knit micro communities. The Islamic characteristic of Turkish background people here in the Netherlands is way more prevalent and dominant comparing to Turkey. In my opinion, addressing this issue, as Geert Wilders suggests, is the most critical problem that requires immediate and careful attention. While some argue that the third generation of Turkish-background Dutch citizens will naturally integrate, this optimism overlooks the influential role of elders in shaping the values and perspectives of the younger generation within conservative cultures. Proactive measures are necessary! To integrate the conservative Turkish-background majority in the Netherlands, it is essential to examine the context in Turkey itself. By adopting symbols of secularism that have withstood centuries of opposition from Islamofascism, we can strengthen the secular identity of Turkish-background individuals in the Netherlands. This serves as an initial step towards fostering healthy integration and may even contribute to improving the context in Turkey, ultimately promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

Turkish history offers numerous examples of secular culture that are surprisingly appreciated by conservative Islamic populations, despite potential conflicts with Islamic principles. Throughout Turkic history, we find instances of women commander-rulers, alcoholic beverages made from horse milk, and pantheistic religious beliefs predating the influence of Islam. Even after Islam's influence, various secular thought leaders, such as Rumi, Yunus Emre, Haci Bektasi Veli, Shams Tabrizi, Sultan Mehmed, Ataturk, Asik Veysel, Mahsuni Serif, and Cem Karaca, successfully harmonized Islam with universal values. Rumi, for instance, was a renowned poet from pre-Ottoman Turkey who explored themes of love, tolerance, and the unity of existence. Despite his references to wine and drinking, his works are highly revered by conservative Turkish individuals and he is regarded as one of the most influential Muslim leaders. His teachings also significantly influenced the culture of the Ottoman Empire, fostering religious tolerance and making it one of the earliest places where Jews, Muslims, and Christians coexisted peacefully side by side. While this may seem less surprising in contemporary times, it was truly revolutionary for its era. Given the current global integration challenges, it is no wonder that Rumi's poetry remains popular and widely read in the United States. This example demonstrates that we can draw inspiration from history to address today's problems and tackle cultural dilemmas.

Returning to the context in the Netherlands, we find that the Turkish-background individuals in the Netherlands have not utilized 'Nardugan' (Turkic Christmas tradition) as a means of integrating with the Dutch, which is an interesting observation. Similarly, while some Turkish restaurants in the Netherlands refuse entry to intoxicated individuals due to religious perspectives, their counterparts in Turkey offer a strong coffee called 'mirra' as a treat for their intoxicated customers. These symbolic practices could be adopted if suitable. For instance, one of Rumi's most iconic phrases (and the key message for the commercial campaign of midye) is "come, whoever you are", yet some Turkish restaurants display intolerance towards the LGBTQ+ community, as revealed in the research conducted for this project. Promoting secular Turkish culture in the Netherlands, will not only help conservative Turkish background people to integrate into Dutch society but also help fixing the damaged Turkish image in the Netherlands.

The key takeaway is that the challenges faced in the Netherlands and the modern world have been condensed and exemplified for centuries in Turkey. It is crucial to study the ongoing struggle between secularism and Islamofascism at its most intense point and provide support in any way possible. If Turkey loses this fight, we all suffer the consequences. Therefore, we should seek out symbolic, secular, traditional, and authentic cultural practices in Turkey and promote them, as they have persevered through centuries of systemic hate and deserve utmost respect. The objective of the project is to create a brand centered around this secular culture, breathing life into it and catalyzing a movement. This presents not only an opportunity to establish a powerful brand deeply rooted in culture but also a chance to make a meaningful impact on the challenging integration subject that we are facing today.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report emphasizes the significance of traditional Dutch culture, international Dutch culture, the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens, conservative Islamic Turkish culture, and secular Turkish culture in the context of branding. The research supports the proposition that creating a brand deeply connected with secular Turkish culture in the Netherlands can enhance integration within Dutch culture, while subduing the influence of the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens and mitigating the impact of conservative Islamic Turkish culture on the conservative Islamic subculture.

The study highlights the importance of careful branding in the fast-food sector, particularly among Turkish establishments in Den Haag, where the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens significantly shape the market. Many of these restaurants emphasize their Muslim identities but often neglect marketing strategies and overall restaurant conditions, which can undermine their brand equity.

Furthermore, the demand research conducted reveals the expectations of individuals belonging to international Dutch culture from the fast-food market. Concerns about health aspects and a desire for greater variety and healthier choices are raised. Based on these insights, along with an examination of traditional Turkish gastronomy, 'Midye Dolma' is identified as a suitable brand for the Dutch market. The aim is to address a market gap while aligning with the brand's traditional Turkish roots, which can potentially influence the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens.

The brand's purpose is to foster better integration and is accompanied by a brand personality described as delicious, sustainable, and wholesome. The launch campaign centers around the key message of 'come whoever you are,' addressing themes of integration, inclusion, and diversity. It showcases the brand's versatility, appealing to individuals seeking taste, a delicious drink companion, environmental friendliness, cruelty-free options, and highly nutritious food.

With this project, the goal is not only to improve integration between international Dutch culture and the conservative Islamic subculture of Turkish background Dutch citizens but also to enhance the overall image of the Turkish community in the Netherlands by promoting secular Turkish culture. By creating a brand that resonates deeply with specific cultures, this project aims to contribute to a more inclusive society where individuals can preserve their heritage while forging connections with Dutch culture and values. The transformative power of culture-informed branding is highlighted, demonstrating its potential to shape perceptions and foster a sense of belonging in diverse societies.

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Appendices

A1 – Results of the Pressure Cooker

A2 – Research Protocol for Context Research

A3 – Results of the Context Research

A4 – Research Protocol for Demand Research

A5 – Results of the Demand Research

A6 – The Offering Research

A7 – Non-Disclosure Agreements

A8 – Verification for the Demand Research

A9 – Comparing Alternative Logos on Semantic Scale

A10 – QR Code for the Payments

A11 – Selection of Participating Restaurants in the Context Research

B – Approved Project Brief