

# Marugame Udon An Analysis of Tenant and Stand-alone Restaurant

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**Abstract** Kini, makanan merupakan salah satu cara penyebaran dan juga pertukaran kultur sebuah bangsa dan negara. Di Indonesia, khususnya di kota besar seperti Jakarta dan Bandung, banyak bermunculan restoran yang menawarkan menu internasional yang mewakili citra sebuah negara. Banyak orang mengenal negara Jepang dari makanan khasnya seperti *sushi* dan *ramen*. Marugame Udon merupakan salah satu *brand franchise* yang mengangkat kultur Jepang melalui makanan udon. Restorannya tersebar ada yang di dalam *mall* atau pusat perbelanjaan dan ada juga restoran yang berdiri sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan yang timbul dari adanya perbedaan implementasi desain interior pada restoran yang berada di dalam mall dan dengan yang lokasi terpisah. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode deskriptif komparatif dengan membandingkan dua restoran *standalone* dengan dua restoran yang berada di dalam *mall*. Hal yang dibandingkan adalah lingkungan fisik dalam sebuah restoran yang dinilai memiliki peran penting dalam memberi stimulus terhadap pengalaman tamu yang datang. Meskipun begitu, hal ini masih dipengaruhi juga oleh factor fungsional dan social dimana tempat tersebut berada. Hal lain yang akan dibahas adalah keotentikan interior yang ada terhadap Jepang.

Nowadays, food is being used to spread and exchange the culture of a nation. In Indonesia, particularly in big cities such as Jakarta and Bandung, there are many specialty restaurants that offer an international menu representing the image of a country. Lot of people knows Japan from their signature food such as sushi and ramen. Marugame Udon is one of many franchises that introduce Japanese culture through food. This brand has two types of restaurants. First, the tenants which are located inside malls or shopping centers and there is also stand-alone restaurants. This research aims to identify the difference between their interior design in both places and its impact on customers' perception. The method used in this research is comparative-descriptive. The physical environment has an important role in giving stimulus to the guest's experiences. However, this is still influenced by the functional and social factors where the place is located. Another subject that will be discussed in this paper is whether or not the design is authentically Japanese or mere cosmetic.

**Keywords** perception, interior design, brand image, restaurant

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## 1. Introduction

### Japanese Architecture and Philosophies

Culture, according to Frost & Hoebel (1976), is an integrated system where behavior pattern is something learned, not something that is biologically inherited. There-

fore, culture could come from anywhere and everywhere. One of the ways is through contacts between a human and their food as a consumer (de Andrade, Murakami, & Moriguchi, 2014)

The Japanese culture is most of the time has a close relation to *Zen* Buddhism. Where philosophies taught are

not far from peace, serenity, and modesty, and at one point, this way of thinking is no longer what it is. It became something that has to do with their everyday life and eventually for them it isn't a mere philosophy or a religion anymore, but common sense. (De Mente, 2006)

According to Bognar B. (1985) though not an explicit phenomenology, Japanese Zen Buddhism, with its implicit existentialism reflected in the traditional arts and architecture, has many similarities to the phenomenological method.

Many Japanese restaurants in Indonesia sure has a big part on this. With the help of trends --which is something the people in Indonesia really look up to, especially amongst the teens and the young adults--, the Japanese culture is pretty famous. Without realizing, they are able to identify the vibe of something related to Japanese, just by glancing at an interior of a place. Be it by seeing something that is truly authentically a Japanese characteristic, or maybe a mere cosmetic, something that looks like it comes from the country just as a decoration to imply the atmosphere.

## 2. Japanese Restaurant Design and

### Branding

In a discussion about recreating Japanese ambience' in Japanese restaurants, some of the things that reflects the stereotypical image of 'traditional' Japanese culture in restaurants are; Japanese background music, wait staff dressed in kimonos, interiors, red lanterns, and bonsai trees. (Cwierka, 2006) in that notion, the Japanese ambience could be created with things that would give people the impression of traditional Japanese, including the implementation of Japanese architecture and interior.

John F. Pile in his book, *a History of Interior Design* (2005), explained some of the signature characteristics in traditional Japanese architecture;

- (1) The building construction consists of wood and was built above a platform.
- (2) The interior was designed according to the layout of the *tatami* mats and room dividers (*shoji*, the translucent, or *fusuma*, not translucent). The white walls decorated with semi naturalistic Japanese paintings.

- (3) Panels and room dividers plays part as area borders, whether it is permanent or movable. In some cases, they are decorated with paintings that tells a story, or sometimes just a painting that portrays nature. In which most of the times, are something of high artistic value.
- (4) The rooms were made as simple as possible, without, or, with minimal furnishing and ornaments, except for some patterns on the sliding screens, and maybe some built-in shelves and cabinets for storage. Some also uses chests for extra storage.
- (5) Space along the veranda, which usually faces the garden, allows servants and workers to move around without disturbing their masters. There is also a special place for moon observation available on the veranda.
- (6) Furniture, other than those that are built-in, wasn't very important in traditional Japanese interior. Where modest *tatami* mats could serve as a place to sit and sleep. Instead of chairs and beds, they used moveable cushion mats to sit and *futons* to sleep.
- (7) Lanterns and candles were the source of light before electricity. Lanterns are lamps, both functional and decorative, also very common to find.

De Mente (2006) also stated that to the people of Japan, human instinctively recognizes that they have a physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual connection to nature. The more closely a product relates to a certain aspect of nature, the more attractive it is. This applies especially to building materials, household furniture, utensils, and interior decorations. *Shizenbi* or natural beauty is also believed to be the core of Japanese aesthetic. They value materials that they use, and choose to show its raw finishing.

In a research conducted on colonial restaurants to test the authenticity of the design, it was found that there are many efforts that can be done by the owner of the building to create the perception that they want. (Handoyo, Rahardjo, Andrianawati, Hanifah, & Ayuningtyas, 2017) in fact, the physical environment and the store atmosphere can be considered a marketing tool. (Kotler, 1973)

Many food companies benefit from a marked regional expression, and there are two kinds of it; ones that profile




themselves as attached to a particular region and food producers, and ones that express their market profile with the aid of the values associated with a particular region. Both of which mixes the facts concerning the regionality, food culture, and historical background, but in combination with the market message, could make them historically incorrect. Instead, it becomes a mixture of selected elements emphasized as being the single and unique characteristics of the region. (Tellström, R., 2011)








The latter phenomenon happens in a lot of foreign restaurants in Indonesia. One of them being Marugame Udon.






### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Marugame Udon as A Standalone Restaurant




From the observation the writers has done during this research, the writers have found some differences and some similarities on two different standalone places;



No.	Marugame Udon, Jatiwaringin	Marugame Udon, Danau Sunter
1.	<p>The building is shaped like a traditional Japanese building, but instead of a platform, the ground floor is used as a parking space, making it look like it's on a platform.</p>  <p>The color of the building itself is made to look like a Japanese building, with windows with the shape of <i>shoji</i> and even a circle window is visible from the front of the building.</p>	<p>The building looks more modern, with a look like a modern Japanese architecture at a glance. The color palette of the building is similar to the one in Jatiwaringin, although the use of stone wall is now just plain grey wall in Danau Sunter.</p>  <p>The building itself is shaped like a warehouse.</p>
2	No music or artificial scent	No music or artificial scent
3	<p>There are some decals of, at</p> 	<p>The same decals are also present. Though when observed carefully, there are some minor alteration to the decals to fit into the surrounding vibe more. the decal of the fish kites,</p>

<p>one glance, fish shaped kites and traditional Japanese men and women, both of which are on some sort of wood paneling.</p>  <p>Some are as big as the wall itself, and some are not.</p> <p>There are also small wooden planks with Japanese writing on it, placed on the columns.</p> 	<p>though look similar, are different in colors.</p>  <p>The one very visible difference on the wall is how the one in Danau Sunter incorporate diagonal wooden lines throughout the walls</p>  
<p>4</p> <p>A single beam is shown on the part where the ceiling is raised in height, in the same part, a set of decorative wooden lines is also visible.</p>  <p>In between the lines are down lights, with warm color that shines towards the dining area.</p>	<p>A set of decorative wooden lines is also very much visible, but the difference is that it is spread out over the entire main dining area's flat ceiling.</p>  <p>the lines are as shown, vertical.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>The lighting in this building is generally warm toned, mostly general down lights, but there are also some spot lights on the edges of the rooms, pointing towards the wall for dramatic effect, and some hanging lamps with the style of modernized</p>	<p>The lighting in this building, to broadly speak, is very much similar to the one in Jatiwaringin but without the standing lamp. The difference is only on the hanging lamps. Other than the fact that it is placed differently to fit the layout, the shape</p>

	Japanese lantern. There is also one lone standing lamp at the smoking area in theme of traditional Japanese lamps.	is also slightly different, though both are based on modernized Japanese lantern.		But this time, they also have stones on the wall. As for decorations, there are some wood paneling, a big picture of mount <i>sanuki fuji</i> , a famous mountain in Marugame, some small pictures of random Japanese things, shelves with traditional Japanese cutlery and dishes, also wooden planks with Japanese writings on it, just like the ones in Jatiwaringin.	does has walls, there are some decorative wood paneling and a line of roof ornament, the same one as the ones on the order and cashier areas. There are also two pictures of udon noodles on a pillar near the cashier.
6	The order and cashier area is decorated with their signature roof ornament, with typical noodle place ornament, a fabric curtain with the store name written on it in Japanese, hanging over the order and cashier area. 	 The order and cashier area here is pretty much the same, with the signature ornaments.  Although the railing used to separate the queuing and the dining area is different than the one used in Jatiwaringin. It is made from wood and metal. 		 	 
		the railing used to separate the queuing and dining area is made of wood.  		There is also a decoration of a crate and some flour sacks.	

### 3.2 Marugame Udon as A Tenant In Shopping Centers

No.	Marugame Udon, Pondok Indah Mall	Marugame Udon, Gandaria City			
1	The areas of the restaurant are integrated into one space.	The areas of the restaurant are divided to smaller spaces, in which some dining areas are separated by the mall's circulation.			
2	No music or artificial scent	No music or artificial scent			
3	The colors of the wall in general are in the same vibe as the other Marugame Udon outlets, broken white and wood brown. 	The colors are generally in the same vibe as the other Marugame Udon outlets. Though in this one, there aren't many decorations due to the lack of wall space. Two of three dining areas are on open spaces with no walls. And on the one that			
			4	The ceiling at the PIM outlet is flat, not very much is done to it except for the decorative hanging lamps installation on the center of the room. 	Two of three dining areas has ceiling over them, and both has the same design of ceiling; horizontal wooden lines that overlays the other on cross sections. 
			5	The lighting uses warm hue white, there are some general down light lighting, some hidden lights near the walls for the dramatic effect, some hanging lamps in the style of modernized lantern near the entrance and a bunch on the center of the room.	Like the other outlets, general downlight, some dramatic lighting on the walls, and hanging lamps spread all over the dining area. Except for the area near the mall's railing that has no ceiling nor walls, there are a few standing lamps.

			
6	<p>Like the other Marugame Udon outlets, the order and cashier area is in the same style, with the roof ornament over the area with the logo and lighting on it and some cloth curtain hanging under it. The railing used to separate the queuing and dining area is made of wood. There are a couple of retractable stanchions where the railings aren't.</p>  <p>there is also a decorative crate and a couple of flour sacks just like the one on Danau Sunter outlet.</p>	<p>Like the other Marugame Udon outlets, the order and cashier area is in the same style, with the roof ornament over the area with the logo and lighting on it and some cloth curtain hanging under it. There is no railing to separate the queue area due to the location. There are retractable stanchions instead. However, there are railings dividing one dining area and the mall's circulation and it is made from wood and metal.</p>	<p>considered to be the most spirited fish, full of energy, power, and the ability to attain high goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roof ornament seen on top of the order and cashier area may be a reference to the Marugame castle, the icon of Marugame region in Kagawa province, Japan.</li> <li>The decal of the traditional men and women also seen on both standalone restaurants, is a digitalized <i>sumi-e</i> or also known as <i>suiboku-ga</i>, the Japanese monochrome ink wash painting. Though it has roots in Chinese calligraphy, the object of the decal shown men and women with Japanese characteristics.</li> <li>The mountain picture seen on Pondok Indah Mall Marugame Udon outlet (and some other outlets not shown in this paper), is the mountain of <i>sanuki fuji</i>, a mountain near the Marugame castle and another icon of the region.</li> <li>Japanese calligraphy, though not necessarily, sometimes are written on wood to sustain the art longer. The wooden planks with Japanese writings seen on some outlets aren't exactly calligraphy, because it weren't hand written. But it seems that it implies it.</li> <li>Pottery is one of the oldest form of craft in Japan. Pottery and porcelain weren't used for a daily domestic use until recently. In the old time, they were reserved for something special, like the tea ceremony.</li> <li>The Japanese uses paper lantern, or <i>shoji</i> lamp, since a long time ago, and is still using the design now, but with some alteration with the use of electricity.</li> <li>The cloth curtain hung above the order and cashier area is called <i>noren</i> or shop curtains. It is traditionally used by shops and restaurants as protection against the sun, rain, dust, and wind, but also as an advertising space with the store or restaurant name on it.</li> <li>There is a Zen Buddhism philosophy towards the duality of round and rectangular windows. The round one is called <i>satori no mado</i> or a window of enlightenment, representing an innocent figure without any prejudice. And the rectangular one is</li> </ol>

### 3.3 Japanese Symbols in Marugame Udon Restaurants

From the observation the writer has done, it is obvious that the restaurant carries some regional value, be it from Marugame, or Japan in general. The interior tells these values through the decorations and ornaments used in the design. Some of which are;

- Koinobori*, the decal seen on both standalone restaurants, literally translated to "carp streamer". It is a carp-shaped windsocks traditionally seen all over Japan to celebrate children's day. The koi fish is

called *mayoi no mado* or the window of bewilderment, the four corners express a human's life and the four things they cannot escape (be born, get old, get sick, and die).

And from the points above and with the data shown before, it is safe to say that the decoration and ornaments are mere cosmetics to make the restaurant has the vibe of a Japanese restaurant representing the Marugame region. There isn't any authenticity in terms of the design of the interior. Though as Tellström (2011) had stated, it doesn't matter very much. If an authentic template is not available, an illusion can be used when food culture is used to brand products or areas. The important thing is for their profile to be perceived as being trustworthy at the point of consumption. and in addition, costumers tend to value the quality of the environment because of their hedonic trait, characterized by the pursuit of aesthetics, which is also a strong feature of Japanese Culture. (de Andrade, Murakami, & Moriguchi, 2014)

#### 4. Conclusion

With the research did and done, the writer has come to a few conclusions. For one, some elements used in the standalone restaurants are sometimes present in some other tenant restaurants as well and vice versa. It seems that Marugame Udon has a few signature ornaments, and the only difference between the standalone and the mall tenant places are the boundaries of the existing place. They obviously have more design freedom on the standalone places than on the malls. One thing that the writer noticed is also the fact that some places looks more modern than the other, though not by far, it shows the inconsistency on the overall theme. Though, not necessarily a bad thing.

The second conclusion the writer has made is that some elements of the design really stand out as something that screams "Japanese". For example, the overall color palette they use in their designs, the shop curtain with Japanese words on it, the decals, and of course, the signature roof ornament. Though people who doesn't know much about Marugame region probably wouldn't know the implications of Marugame castle from that roof, or the *sanuki fuji* mountain in the picture. But they all looked "Japanese

enough" for mundane people to know that it is Japanese. In fact, maybe by looking at something they hadn't known is Japanese side by side to something they had known is Japanese, would unconsciously help them identifying the Japanese culture better in the future.

The last conclusion is the authenticity of the interior design. The interior of Marugame Udon restaurant, as discussed, is made to show the vibe of something Japanese, but not necessarily made to show the vibe of an udon restaurant from Marugame. The shop curtain does show some authenticity, but other than that, the ornaments are just cosmetics. Even though the system of the restaurant and the food itself is said to be authentic, the interior is made to be more modern and altered to fit into the market.

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