

GASTRODIPLOMACY: HARNESSING CULINARY TRADITIONS TO BOOST BOROBUDUR'S NATIONAL TOURISM STRATEGIC AREA POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Borobudur, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Central Java, Indonesia, plays a crucial role in the nation's tourism by enhancing economic growth and cultural prestige. The Indonesian government has designated Borobudur as part of the National Tourism Strategic Areas (KSPN) to boost tourism while preserving cultural heritage. A key strategy in this initiative is gastrodiplomacy, which uses Indonesia's diverse culinary traditions to attract international tourists, particularly the growing "gastro-tourist" segment. This article explores the potential of local culinary traditions in supporting Borobudur's tourism, highlighting collaborative efforts among various stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism development, economic benefits for local communities, and cultural preservation through gastrodiplomacy. This paper employed a qualitative, interpretive (post-positivist) approach to examine the role of culinary diplomacy in Indonesia's to developing tourism capacity in specified area. The results show; by showcasing its unique culinary offerings and integrating them into a holistic tourism strategy, the Borobudur region can unlock new avenues for growth while providing visitors with authentic cultural immersion.

INTRODUCTION

Borobudur, the majestic ninth-century Buddhist monument located in Central Java, Indonesia, serves as both a symbol of the nation's cultural grandeur and a strategic node in Indonesia's tourism economy (Iwahara, 2009). As a renowned UNESCO World Heritage site and a significant cultural and historical landmark, Borobudur's development required specific strategies that benefit not only the site but also the people and areas around it.

One of the government's strategies to enhance its tourism development was establishing the classification of Kawasan Strategis Pariwisata Nasional (KSPN) or National Tourism Strategic Areas. Indonesia has officially classified several regions under KSPN. These regions, such as the Borobudur area, become priorities for development and promotion to attract local and international tourists and contribute to national economy.



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The KSPN policy highlights the Indonesian government's dedication to using tourism as a driver for economic expansion while safeguarding the country's abundant cultural heritage.

Minister of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR), for instance, elaborated three programs for KSPN Borobudur, including easing access to toll and non-toll roads, reforming the village's housing into cottages and homestays and encouraging business development, and, lastly, establishing regional planning (Sinaga, 2024). Aside from infrastructure development, there is a need for growth in areas beyond infrastructure to enhance comfort, events, and promotion. One of the practical approaches could be implemented to enhancing Borobudur attraction is gastrodiploamacy by utilize the culinary sector. Gastrodiploamacy refers to cultural diplomacy in which food/cuisine becomes weapons to gain national interest. Gastro diplomacy differs from food diplomacy (the use of food in handling crises) and is broader than culinary diplomacy (culinary used in diplomatic dinners to strengthen the state's relationship) (Rockower, 2012).

Indonesia has rich and varied regional cuisines and traditional cooking techniques. This presents a valuable and unexplored opportunity to attract international tourists and enhance the attractiveness of tourist locations such as Borobudur (Priadi, 2021). Strategically highlighting the culinary aspect of the area can create an engaging and stimulating experience that complements the Borobudur's architectural and historical importance. The combination will help improve its reputation as a top cultural tourism destination and increase global recognition (Suntikul, 2017; Iwahara, 2009).

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism recovery has demanded new and creative pathways for differentiation and revitalization. One such pathway is the incorporation of gastrodiploamacy, the strategic use of culinary heritage to foster cultural engagement and economic benefit. Gastrodiploamacy goes beyond the use of food in diplomatic settings and positions cuisine as an instrument of national branding and cultural storytelling. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of Borobudur, where culinary traditions remain underutilized within the formal tourism narrative.

Indonesia's culinary diversity presents a distinctive comparative advantage that aligns with emerging tourism trends. Today's global tourists are increasingly motivated by experiential travel, seeking to observe and to participate in local lifeways. The rise of the gastro-tourist, a visitor whose travel decision is significantly influenced by the desire to explore food cultures, represents a market segment with growing economic relevance (Priadi, 2021). Strategically integrating gastronomy into Borobudur's tourism offerings thus serves a dual purpose, substantial economic advantages for the nearby communities by empowering local business owners and artisans and fostering sustainable tourism growth that is deeply connected to the region's distinct cultural heritage (Ahyani, et al., 2020).

Despite the promising outlook, the application of gastrodiploamacy in Indonesia's tourism policy remains insufficiently explored. Existing studies have focused on infrastructure development and macroeconomic impacts of tourism, but there is a gap in understanding how soft power tools such as culinary heritage can serve as leverage for regional tourism competitiveness and cultural sustainability (Suntikul, 2017; Ahyani et al., 2020). This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the role of gastrodiploamacy in Borobudur's tourism development under the KSPN framework.

Furthermore, this research emphasizes the importance of stakeholder collaboration, including government agencies, private sectors, and local communities, in translating culinary potential into structured and sustainable tourism programming.



Through this lens, gastrodiploacy functions as a cultural element that simultaneously serves as a developmental strategy, intersecting with policy, identity, and economic inclusion.

Accordingly, this article aims to explore the extent to which local culinary traditions can support the tourism objectives of KSPN Borobudur. It analyzes stakeholder initiatives, maps emerging gastro-tourism practices, and evaluates the alignment between national tourism goals and local cultural capacities. By doing so, the study contributes to the growing literature on cultural diplomacy and tourism governance while offering a grounded model for integrating culinary identity into regional development policy.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach situated within a post-positivist epistemological framework. The chosen methodology is well-suited to explore the complexities of cultural representation, stakeholder dynamics, and policy discourse, especially in relation to the integration of culinary heritage into tourism development. Rather than seeking to establish universal generalizations, the study aims to understand how meaning is constructed, negotiated, and operationalized through gastrodiploacy in the specific context of Borobudur as a KSPN.

The research adopted a single-case study design focused on the Borobudur region due to its national importance, rich cultural heritage, and active implementation of community-based tourism initiatives. A case study design allows for an in-depth, context-sensitive analysis that reveals how local actors interact with national policies and global tourism trends through the medium of culinary identity. The case was selected due to its policy relevance and its emerging role in Indonesia's gastro-tourism discourse.

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques. First, document analysis was conducted on a range of sources, including national tourism regulations development plans to Magelang and the Borobudur area. This was complemented by content analysis of media coverage, tourism brochures, and promotional materials that frame Borobudur's culinary attractions. These materials were analyzed to capture how gastrodiploacy is represented and promoted at institutional and public levels.

Additionally, observations of culinary practices were incorporated based on field notes, photographic documentation, and secondary reports from activities in tourism villages. These observations focused on local culinary products, which represent distinct gastronomic identities. Although no formal interviews were conducted, stakeholder roles were mapped through available documentation of collaboration between government bodies, private actors, and local communities.

The data were analyzed thematically. Emergent themes included the cultural framing of culinary tourism, the institutionalization of gastrodiploacy, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in Borobudur's tourism development. An inductive approach was applied to allow themes to emerge organically from the data, while remaining informed by theoretical insights on cultural diplomacy and sustainable tourism.

This study relied on publicly accessible sources. Nonetheless, ethical considerations were applied in ensuring accurate attribution, respectful representation of local knowledge, and the responsible use of cultural narratives. By combining multiple data sources and interpretive methods, this research offers a context-rich understanding of how gastrodiploacy is emerging as a strategic tool for tourism and cultural development in Borobudur.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gastrodiplomacy: Elevating Tourism through Culinary Experiences

In an era where travelers increasingly seek authentic and immersive experiences, culinary heritage serves as a bridge between local identity and global engagement. Gastrodiplomacy, was one of the strategic utilizations for a nation to enhance its culinary heritage as cultural diplomacy and promote tourism. This approach has emerged as a powerful tool for economic and social development. The intersection of gastronomy, culture, and tourism has created a unique opportunity for destinations to showcase their rich culinary traditions, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation among visitors.

In recent years, the rise of culinary tourism has transformed the way travelers experience and engage with the world around them. Tourists are increasingly seeking out authentic, immersive experiences that allow them to delve into the heart of a destination's local culture, with food serving as a gateway to understanding the history, traditions, and identity of a region. As a result, gastrodiplomacy has become an essential component of destination marketing and tourism development strategies, enabling destinations to differentiate themselves, attract a broader audience, and create lasting memories for visitors.

The power of gastrodiplomacy in supporting tourism development is evident in various case studies around the world. In the case of Odisha, India, the gastronomic trilogy of food, culture, and tourism has been leveraged to enhance the destination's marketing efforts and appeal to a wider range of travelers. The region's unique culinary heritage, deeply intertwined with its cultural essence, has become a central theme in the tourism experience, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the local way of life.

Similarly, in the northern areas of Pakistan, local cuisine has emerged as a popular tourist attraction, serving as an integral component of the region's cultural legacy and a source of income for the tourism industry. Gastronomic tourism, in this context, has become a powerful tool for promoting the destination and conveying a distinct image to potential visitors.

As destinations strive to differentiate themselves and attract a growing number of tourists, the strategic integration of gastrodiplomacy has become increasingly crucial. By leveraging the gastronomic resources and cultural essence of a destination, tourism marketers can create a compelling narrative that resonates with travelers, ultimately enhancing the overall tourism experience and contributing to the sustainable development of the destination (Mohanty et al., 2020; Ullah et al., 2022).

The Culinary-Driven Development of Tourism

Tourism development has become a crucial strategy for many regions seeking to diversify their economic activities and enhance their local identity. One key aspect of this approach is the promotion of regional culinary offerings as a tourism resource, a concept known as "gastronomy tourism" or "culinary tourism" (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). The close relationship between food, culture, and the tourism experience can serve as a powerful tool for destination marketing and economic development.

Research has highlighted the potential of culinary tourism to drive tourism growth in regions that may lack conventional natural or cultural attractions (Ullah et al., 2022; Mohanty et al., 2020; Su & Horng, 2012). Local cuisine can become a primary tourist attraction, serving as a tangible representation of the area's cultural heritage and a means of conveying the unique character of a destination (Mohanty et al., 2020). Food



consumption can even become a "peak touristic experience," potentially serving as the sole or primary motivation for visiting a destination (Su & Horng, 2012).

Destinations that have successfully leveraged their culinary assets have demonstrated the viability of this approach. In northern Pakistan, for example, local cuisine has become a popular tourist attraction, integrated into the cultural legacy of the region. Similarly, in East Luwu District, Indonesia, culinary tourism has been identified as a means of supporting the potential of natural, cultural, historical, and marine tourism offerings (Manaf, 2020).

The development of culinary tourism involves several key dimensions. First, the culinary attributes of the region, including the ingredients, preparation methods, and flavour profiles, must be identified and effectively promoted. Second, the dining experience itself should be carefully curated to create a memorable and immersive cultural experience for visitors (Ishak et al., 2023). This may involve strategies such as offering an authentic menu, strengthening the cultural identity through the physical environment, and creating a harmonious ambiance (Su & Horng, 2012; Ishak et al., 2023).

Ethnic restaurants, in particular, have been recognized as playing a crucial role in the food tourism industry, as they provide a gateway for tourists to engage with the local culture through cuisine. Establishing signature dishes and unique culinary identities can further enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of a destination, and contribute to the development of a strong tourism brand.

Ultimately, the integration of culinary assets into tourism development strategies can yield significant economic and social benefits for regional communities. By highlighting the unique food culture and traditions of a destination, tourism can serve as a catalyst for the preservation and promotion of local culinary heritage, while also generating employment and income opportunities for the local population (Jorge-Acain, 2022; Ullah et al., 2022).

In case of Borobudur as one of the top 5 priority destination tourism area, gastrodiploacy could present as an alternative to boost its image to the international community. The related stakeholders need to cultivate its potential to optimizing the outcome of the promotional activities and tourism development. Unlike conventional tourism promotions that focus solely on historical or natural attractions, gastrodiploacy offers an alternative pathway to differentiate Borobudur's image not only as historical site but also by embedding its culinary heritage (e.g., Javanese traditions, Buddhist influences, and local flavors) into the visitor experience.

The Role of Related Stakeholder in Supporting Borobudur National Tourism Strategic Areas

Indonesia's tourism sector has been identified as a key driver for the country's economic development (Kusumawardhana et al., 2021). The government has implemented the National Tourism Strategic Areas policy to promote sustainable tourism in various regions across the archipelago (Kusumawardhana et al., 2021). However, the success of this policy relies on the active engagement and coordination of multiple stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and local communities.

The government plays a crucial role in establishing the legal and regulatory framework for tourism development. The government roles could be viewed in multi layered stages. As the central government by the related ministry issued regulation in regard to support the development of tourism area. The Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) has emphasized the strategic importance of the tourism industry in



its long-term development plans. This has led to the designation of specific areas as National Tourism Strategic Areas, which receive targeted support and investment. This was followed up by the ministry in charge of infrastructure development (PUPR) to allocate a budget to support the development of priority tourist destinations.

Table 1. Ministry of PUPR Development Activities (2020-2023) Regarding 5 National Tourism Strategic Areas

| No. | Tourism Area | Total Amount (IDR) |
|-----|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Labuan Bajo | 1,7 trillion |
| 2 | Danau Toba | 1,4 trillion |
| 3 | Borobudur | 1,8 trillion |
| 4 | Likupang | 755 billion |
| 5 | Mandalika | 1,5 trillion |

Source: Direktorat Jenderal Pembiayaan Infrastruktur, Ministry of PUPR

The government also responsible for coordinating the various government agencies involved in tourism management, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive approach. Meanwhile, to specifically boost the national tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) of Indonesia has designated five super-priority tourist destinations which Borobudur was one of them. This designation is supported by various regulations and policies aimed at significantly enhancing the development of these tourist destinations.

Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism which serves as the legal foundation for tourism development in Indonesia, including the development of super-priority tourist destinations. It regulates various aspects of tourism, from planning and management to promotion. Presidential Regulation No. 92 of 2019 which outlines the development of the five super-priority tourist destinations: Lake Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, and Likupang. It provides a vision, mission, and programs for each destination. By designing super-priority tourist destinations, it expected to enhancing Tourism Quality, Infrastructure Development, Promotion and Marketing as well as increasing Community Involvement. This regulation also supported by the establishment of Badan Otorita Borobudur in 2018 as an attempt to conduct coordination, synchronization, and facilitation of planning, development, construction, and control in the Borobudur Tourism Area; and conduct planning, development, construction, management, and control in the authority zone of the Borobudur Tourism Area.

In regional level, the regulation also reinforced by the Regional Regulation (Peraturan Daerah) of Magelang Regency Number 4 of 2015 concerning the Master Plan for Tourism Development of Magelang Regency 2014-2034. With supportive regulations and a serious commitment to development, it is expected that these super-priority tourist destinations will become the driving force for Indonesia's tourism and contribute significantly to the national economy.

The private sector, on the other hand, is a vital partner in the implementation of the National Tourism Strategic Areas policy. Businesses in the tourism industry, such as hotels or guesthouses, tour operators, and restaurants, are responsible for developing and delivering high-quality tourism products and services. Effective collaboration between the government and private sector is essential to address challenges such as limited budgets, lack of skilled human resources, and the need for infrastructure development.



Most of the private sector involved in the utilization of culinary potential in the Borobudur area are micro level businesses. Therefore, government support is highly expected to be present among entrepreneurs to increase their capacity, both in terms of production and managerial capacity. The support emerged from state-owned enterprises that collaborated with local communities to develop existing local potential. No less than 20 state-owned enterprises collaborated with villages spread throughout the Borobudur sub-district to develop local capacity and put investment in these villages.

Local communities are also crucial stakeholders in the success of the National Tourism Strategic Areas policy. The development of rural tourism, often in the form of tourism villages, has been identified as a key strategy to promote inclusive and sustainable development. Local communities possess valuable knowledge of their natural and cultural resources, which can be leveraged to create unique and authentic tourism experiences. However, the integration of local communities into the tourism value chain requires careful planning and capacity building to ensure their active participation and equitable distribution of benefits (Febriana et al., 2023).

One key initiative that has contributed to the development of rural tourism in Magelang Regency is the establishment of village economic center or Balai Ekonomi Desa (Balkondes) in Borobudur District. Until 2025, there are 21 Balkondes operated across the district. The Balkondes program, launched by the government by collaborating with the stated-owned enterprise, aims to empower rural communities and transform them into thriving tourist destinations. Through this initiative, villages are equipped with the necessary infrastructure, training, and resources to develop and promote their unique cultural, natural, and agricultural offerings.

The Balkondes program has been implemented in several villages across Magelang Regency, each with its own distinctive attractions and activities. For instance, the Balkondes in Desa Karangrejo has leveraged the village's scenic landscape and rich agricultural heritage to offer visitors hands-on experiences in organic farming, as well as opportunities to explore local culinary traditions and traditional crafts. Similarly, the Balkondes in Desa Ngargogondo has capitalized on the region's natural beauty and engage with local artisans and cultural performers.

The success of the Balkondes program has been largely attributed to its focus on community empowerment and collaboration. By actively involving local residents in the planning, management, and promotion of these tourist villages, the program has not only generated economic benefits but also fostered a strong sense of community ownership and pride. Furthermore, the Balkondes program has encouraged the preservation of traditional practices and cultural heritage, ensuring that the unique identity of Magelang Regency remains at the forefront of the rural tourism experience.

Untapping the Culinary Potential of the Borobudur Region for Borobudur National Tourism Strategic Areas

The Borobudur region in Indonesia holds immense potential for the development of community-based tourism, particularly in the realm of culinary offerings (Ahsani et al., 2022). As a tourism destination, Borobudur is renowned for its iconic Buddhist temple, drawing visitors from around the world. However, the region's culinary landscape remains largely untapped, presenting a significant opportunity for local economic growth and cultural preservation.

The diverse array of local cuisines and food products in the Borobudur area could serve as a powerful attraction for tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences (Wiyono



et al., 2022). These culinary offerings, rooted in the region's rich agricultural heritage, have the potential to complement the existing historical and natural attractions, thereby enhancing the overall tourism experience (Wiyono et al., 2022). Furthermore, the development of culinary tourism in Borobudur could provide a platform for local communities to showcase their unique traditions, foster cultural exchange, and generate sustainable livelihoods.

From the observation conducted in the Borobudur area, found several culinary potencies could be develop as branding efforts as well as characteristics to support the development of strategic tourism areas. Some of them have also been able to develop as culinary icons for tourists who visiting the Borobudur area, including rengginang, Mie (noodles) lethek, and honey farmed by local farmers with a distinctive taste because of geographical indication it has. These three products have their own selling point to attract the tourist.

The rengginang center developed in the Wanurejo village by establishing Rengginang SMEs Bu Yatin. It's hold its own tradition in the processing stage. The process of making rengginang still uses traditional tools and methods, for frying and steaming they still use a stove and firewood. The visitors can also see and experiencing themselves the process, from the beginning to frying. In addition to that, to attract a wider audience, the owner also creates the store more comfortable to the visitors, providing traditional table and chair to tasting all types of rengginang provided on the table while drinking warm cup of tea or coffee provided by the store.

Meanwhile, the mie (noodle) lethek initially emerged as a solution to the surplus production of palm starch in past which made local residents think hard about how to utilize it as one of the superior culinary products in the Borobudur area. But, as it growing its popularity among the domestic and international tourists, mie lethek already become one of the complements in various processed foods in the Borobudur area and its surroundings.

For the honey produced around Borobudur area, has its own characteristics, namely the honey bees which come from calliandra flowers, where calliandra flowers are quite abundant in Bukit Menoreh. There (the slopes of Bukit Menoreh) they have around 400 honey bee boxes so that it will be enough to meet market needs. To attract the tourists, they not only sell honey, but also gives education about beekeeping. This kind of promotion not only attract the visitors to come to buy honey, but also to gain knowledge about beekeeping.

In integrating the promotional activities, the tourism operator around Borobudur area also incorporated their activities with culinary experiences which some of it already mentioned above. For examples VW or Jeep tour that circling around the Borobudur village area while stopping at local SMEs offering their culinary products.

Developing the culinary potential of the Borobudur region, however, is not without its challenges. Careful planning and integrated approaches are needed to ensure that the benefits of tourism development are equitably distributed among the local communities, and that the cultural and environmental integrity of the region is preserved. Strategies such as community-based tourism initiatives, targeted infrastructure investments, and collaborative marketing efforts could be instrumental in unlocking the full potential of Borobudur's culinary landscape for the benefit of both visitors and local stakeholders (Ahsani et al., 2022; Khasanah & Herlawati, 2021; AHMAD & Warsitasari, 2023).



Gastrodiplomacy and Cultural Identity: Strengthening Local Branding through Culinary Narratives

Gastrodiplomacy contributes to attracting tourists while simultaneously articulating and reinforcing cultural identity, making cuisine a medium for cultural continuity and pride. In the context of Borobudur, where heritage narratives are often dominated by temple-centric tourism, the inclusion of culinary storytelling provides an alternative medium for expressing the community's living culture. Local dishes, food rituals, and preparation methods carry layers of meaning, embedded with historical memory, agricultural heritage, and intergenerational knowledge.

The use of firewood and traditional stoves in making rengginang illustrates the villagers' continued commitment to inherited techniques and their harmony with the surrounding environment. The use of palm starch in mie lethekek illustrates local resourcefulness and conveys a story of adaptation and wisdom in responding to economic conditions. These food practices become vehicles through which the community asserts its uniqueness, authenticity, and relevance in a rapidly commodified tourism economy.

Positioning such culinary elements as cultural capital helps build a grounded form of nation branding that emerges organically from local communities and reflects their lived cultural realities. In this sense, gastrodiplomacy functions as a means of articulating identity and pride that grows from community engagement and local cultural expression. Such an approach supports sustainable tourism goals by involving communities as participants in representing and preserving their cultural heritage.

The challenge, therefore, lies in curating these food narratives in a way that maintains authenticity while also engaging international audiences. This may involve the strategic use of storytelling in menus, culinary festivals, or even digital content that highlights the origin and meaning behind each dish. Through such integrative efforts, gastrodiplomacy serves as a form of cultural diplomacy that invites tourists to engage with local flavors while deepening their understanding of the cultural contexts behind them.

To strengthen gastrodiplomacy through integrative efforts, multiple layers of collaboration and narrative framing need to be designed. First, food experiences should be embedded into broader tourism circuits that go beyond consumption, turning culinary practices into participatory cultural activities. For instance, cooking classes hosted by the locals, farm-to-table experiences involving traditional harvesting, or guided food tours with embedded storytelling elements can all transform culinary encounters into immersive cultural learning.

Second, strengthening institutional support is key. This includes providing capacity building for culinary entrepreneurs, such as training in branding, food presentation, hygiene, and cross-cultural communication. Local governments, tourism boards, and village cooperatives can play an enabling role by supporting certifications for food authenticity or facilitating access to microfinance for culinary start-ups. By supporting product development, these institutional efforts also contribute to building pride and strengthening the professional identity of local culinary actors.

Third, integrative gastrodiplomacy benefits greatly from digital innovation. Visual storytelling through short videos, interactive food maps, and virtual culinary tours can help reach global audiences and build transnational cultural connections. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and tourism apps provide avenues to showcase culinary experiences alongside the people and stories that give them meaning. These narratives, when well-



curated, humanize the tourism experience and increase emotional resonance among visitors.

The incorporation of food heritage into local education and tourism curriculum can deepen intergenerational transmission and ensure the sustainability of culinary traditions. Involving schools, youth communities, and local artists in culinary documentation projects, such as recipe archives, oral histories, or food-themed exhibitions, can strengthen the socio-cultural foundation of gastrodiploacy in Borobudur and beyond.

The integration of gastrodiploacy within Borobudur's tourism strategy offers a multidimensional pathway to elevate both cultural identity and community resilience. By transforming local culinary traditions into experiences, gastrodiploacy reinforces cultural continuity, enhances destination branding, and invites tourist engagement. Its success, however, relies on collaborative efforts that interweave narrative richness, institutional support, digital innovation, and educational inclusion. Aligning narrative, institutional, technological, and educational strategies allows gastrodiploacy to function as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy while also supporting sustainable community empowerment and fostering global cultural dialogue.

CONCLUSION

The development of Borobudur as one of Indonesia's National Tourism Strategic Areas (KSPN) reflects an effort by the government to integrate cultural heritage into economic revitalization and global tourism branding. While substantial attention has been devoted to improving infrastructure, hospitality services, and environmental sustainability, this study draws attention to the powerful role of culinary heritage through the framework of gastrodiploacy. Rather than positioning food as a mere supplementary element of tourism, this research affirms the potential of local culinary traditions in enriching visitor experiences, strengthening cultural identity, and expanding the base of community-driven economic development.

By exploring the nexus of gastronomy, public policy, and stakeholder collaboration, the study demonstrates that gastrodiploacy in Borobudur is both viable and essential. Local food products such as rengginang, mie letheke, and Menoreh hill honey are cultural artifacts that connect historical narratives with the everyday lives of local residents. With support in the form of training, promotional strategies, and experiential tourism integration, these products can contribute to building an immersive cultural tourism identity for Borobudur that aligns with the expectations of a growing global segment of gastro-tourists.

Realizing this vision, however, depends on stakeholder synergy. Government regulation, community-based initiatives, and private sector engagement are all crucial in translating policy aspirations into actionable outcomes. Challenges do persist, especially in maintaining the authenticity of culinary heritage, achieving equitable participation across actors, and developing coherent marketing strategies that position Borobudur's food culture as an integral component of its tourism appeal.

Gastrodiploacy emerges as a multidimensional strategy that enhances national branding, enriches the tourist experience, supports rural economies, and preserves cultural continuity. As such, it should be embraced as a pillar of tourism development. Future tourism planning must institutionalize culinary development, expand training for food entrepreneurs, and utilize digital storytelling to extend the cultural reach of Borobudur's gastronomic assets.



Despite these insights, the study acknowledges several limitations. It relies on qualitative methods, primarily document analysis and content interpretation, which, while rich in depth, do not provide quantitative measures of tourist behavior or economic impact. The geographic scope is limited to the Borobudur area, potentially constraining generalizability to other regions. Furthermore, the absence of direct data from tourists, especially international visitors, limits the understanding of consumer perspectives. Lastly, the dynamic nature of tourism in the post-pandemic era requires that findings be continually reassessed in light of policy shifts and evolving traveler expectations.

To address these gaps and enhance implementation, several recommendations are proposed. First, culinary tourism must be fully integrated into tourism policy and budgetary frameworks at both national and regional levels. Second, capacity-building initiatives should be developed to strengthen local culinary actors in areas such as food safety, branding, storytelling, and digital marketing. Third, infrastructure investments should support participatory and experience-based food tourism, such as culinary trails, cooking schools, and village-based food experiences. Fourth, transmedia storytelling strategies must be employed to promote culinary heritage to global audiences. Fifth, participatory governance structures must be institutionalized to ensure coordination and equitable benefit-sharing among stakeholders. Finally, future research should pursue mixed-methods and comparative studies across other KSPN regions to evaluate the applicability and impact of gastrodiploacy within Indonesia's tourism development agenda.

In conclusion, this study affirms the relevance of gastrodiploacy as a culturally rooted and economically promising approach to tourism development in Borobudur. By embracing local food heritage as a developmental tool, Indonesia can cultivate a tourism model that is resilient, and globally distinctive, one where food becomes a medium for diplomacy, identity formation, and sustainable progression.

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