

The Gastrodiplomacy Model as an Optimization of the Sustainable Tourism Sector in Semarang City

Kamal Ramadhani¹, Amir Mahmud^{2*}, Moch Faizal Rachmadi³

^{1,2}Department of Economic Education, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

³Department of Economic Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Ivet, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: amirmahmud@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract: Gastrodiplomacy has increasingly been recognized as a strategic approach to promote cultural identity and tourism development through culinary heritage. However, most existing studies focus on gastrodiplomacy at the national level, whereas research on city-level gastrodiplomacy models integrated with sustainable tourism systems remains limited. This study aims to examine the role of gastrodiplomacy in optimizing the sustainable tourism sector in Semarang City, Indonesia. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach involving 20 informants representing the ABCGM stakeholders (academics, business actors, communities, government, and media). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The validity of the data was ensured through source and methodological triangulation, and the data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that Semarang's gastrodiplomacy is manifested through three main culinary clusters: milkfish, herbal medicine, and *lumpia*, which function as cultural and economic assets for tourism promotion. The study identifies that the effectiveness of gastrodiplomacy depends on stakeholder collaboration, the development of culinary identity, tourism integration, and digital promotion strategies. This study proposes an integrated gastrodiplomacy model that connects culinary clusters, tourism destinations, transportation accessibility, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen sustainable tourism development. The findings contribute theoretically by expanding the gastrodiplomacy literature from a city-level sustainable tourism perspective, while offering practical policy insights for developing culinary-based destination branding and strengthening local economic resilience.

Keywords: Culinary, Gastrodiplomacy, Semarang City, Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Destinations.

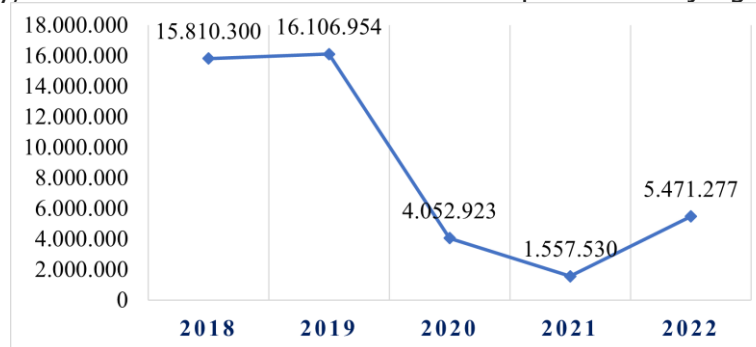
Article History: Submitted 15 January 2026 | Revised 12 February 2026 | Accepted 8 March 2026

How to Cite: Ramadhani, K., Mahmud, A., & Faizal Rachmadi, M. (2026). The Gastrodiplomacy Model as an Optimization of the Sustainable Tourism Sector in Semarang City. *International Journal of Green Tourism Research and Applications*, 8(1), 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.31940/ijogtra.v8i1.41-54>.

Introduction

Indonesia's tourism sector is highly sought after by tourists, both domestically and internationally (Burhanudin & Unnithan, 2022; Pujiati et al., 2023; Yanto et al., 2024). As of 2022, foreign tourist visits to Indonesia totaled 5,471,277. Therefore, the government continues to strive to increase tourist visits by encouraging the tourism sector to improve, innovate, and optimally enhance all elements of its services (BPS, 2023; Pujiati & Imron, 2020; Prasetyo et al., 2022; Fafurida et al., 2020). Foreign tourists arrive in Indonesia through the main entry gates using various modes of transportation, including air, sea, and land. This transportation integration is essential for achieving tourist visitation targets and for optimally increasing the country's foreign exchange

earnings (Anggraini & Pujiati, 2022). One of the areas serving as the main entry point is Semarang City, home to Ahmad Yani International Airport and Tanjung Mas Port.



(Source: Central Statistics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023)

Figure 1. Statistics on Foreign Tourist Arrivals to Indonesia (Number of Visits)

Semarang, the capital city of Central Java Province, is a metropolitan city covering 373.78 square kilometers and has considerable potential in various sectors, particularly tourism. In 2022, Semarang City recorded 5,338,233 domestic tourists and 4,918 international tourists through its main entry points (BPS Semarang City, 2023). This high volume of activity and mobility presents a unique opportunity to increase tourist arrivals (Pujiati et al., 2020). However, the data also indicate that Semarang City has not been effective at attracting global tourists.

Semarang offers a diverse range of tourism attractions, including the Old Town, Lawang Sewu, Sam Po Kong Temple, the Great Mosque of Central Java (MAJT), and more (Pujiati et al., 2022). The city's natural, socio-cultural, historical, educational, and religious tourism elements are inseparable (Pujiati et al., 2016; Setiono et al., 2021). Semarang also offers public transportation via bus rapid transit, making it easy for passengers to get around at low cost and with adequate facilities (Septada et al., 2023). Not only that, Semarang City's culinary specialties, such as *lumpia*, soft-bone milkfish, and *wingko babat*, are also an inseparable part of the tourism sector, meaning they serve as souvenirs/gifts so that they can be widely known by the public (Sifa et al, 2023; Widowati et al, 2022).

It appears that the government has not been able to maximize this potential due to the lack of strategic integration between tourist destinations, transportation, and culinary offerings in Semarang. Therefore, an integrated cross-sector model is needed to enhance Semarang's appeal. The culinary sector plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism in Semarang. The culinary sector is considered the most comprehensive and integrated effort to promote a region's tourism offerings to the wider public (Astuti et al., 2023). This effort is known as the gastrodiploamacy model. Gastrodiploamacy is a form of culinary-based cultural diplomacy that enhances a positive brand image and promotes the community comprehensively and sustainably (Nair, 2021). Semarang boasts a variety of culinary specialties, such as lumpia (spring rolls), soft-bone milkfish, and *wingko babat* (traditional Indonesian rice cakes), with diverse product variations that attract tourists.

Semarang possesses a variety of unique culinary products that could serve as instruments of gastrodiploamacy. However, the culinary sector in Semarang is still dominated by small-scale Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that operate independently and lack integrated promotional strategies (Prajanti et al., 2023). Culinary products are often positioned merely as souvenirs rather than being integrated into tourism experiences and cultural storytelling. Furthermore, issues such as inconsistent

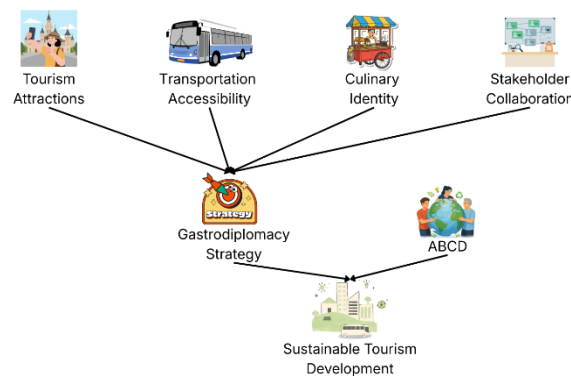
product quality, limited adherence to food safety standards, and inadequate packaging design continue to undermine the competitiveness of Semarang's culinary sector in the broader tourism market (Aprilia & Priantina, 2022).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of stakeholder collaboration in tourism development, including the roles of government institutions, tourism operators, culinary entrepreneurs, local communities, and academics (Setiono et al., 2021). However, stakeholder involvement in promoting Semarang's cultural and culinary identity has not been optimally implemented. This condition has contributed to the gradual erosion of the Spirit of Place, which represents the unique cultural atmosphere and identity of Semarang as a tourism destination. To address this issue, integrating digital technology with human-centered tourism approaches has been proposed as a strategy to enhance visitor engagement and the tourism experience (Stankov & Gretzel, 2020).

In addition, community-based approaches such as Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) emphasize local communities as key actors in tourism development by leveraging local cultural and economic assets (Ramadhani, 2025). Through collaborative engagement among stakeholders, culinary heritage and local tourism assets can be transformed into integrated tourism experiences that support sustainable development.

Although previous research has discussed tourism potential, cultural identity, and culinary promotion in various regions, several important research gaps remain. First, most gastrodiploacy studies focus on national-level culinary diplomacy and country branding, whereas research on city-level gastrodiploacy remains limited, particularly as a strategy for sustainable tourism development. Second, existing studies generally analyze culinary tourism as an independent sector, rather than examining how culinary identity can be integrated with tourism attractions, transportation systems, and community participation within a comprehensive tourism ecosystem. Third, there remains limited theoretical development of stakeholder-based gastrodiploacy models that incorporate human-centered tourism and community-based development approaches.

Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by developing an integrated gastrodiploacy model that connects tourism destinations, culinary sectors, transportation infrastructure, technology, and community participation to support sustainable tourism development in Semarang City. By integrating these elements, this study contributes to expanding the theoretical understanding of gastrodiploacy as a multidimensional tourism development strategy rather than merely a culinary promotion tool. Based on these considerations, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows: 1) What roles do stakeholders play in developing a sustainable gastrodiploacy model in Semarang City? 2) How can a stakeholder-based gastrodiploacy model optimize the sustainable tourism sector in Semarang? To address these questions, this study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates gastrodiploacy, stakeholder collaboration, human-centered tourism, and community-based development as key components in strengthening sustainable tourism in Semarang City.



(Source: Author Illustration, 2026)

Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Approach and Design

This research uses a qualitative approach, which produces descriptive data. Qualitative methodology is defined as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the people being observed. Researchers attempt to clearly and freely express the research situation or data description, ensuring it is accurate and factual. This aims to provide a precise picture of a particular individual, condition, symptom, or group, and to systematically describe the phenomenon under study based on the data obtained. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, which aims to systematically and factually describe the phenomenon of gastrodiplomacy practices and their contribution to sustainable tourism development. Through this design, the researchers attempt to provide a comprehensive depiction of stakeholder collaboration, culinary identity, and tourism integration within the gastrodiplomacy framework in Semarang City.

Research Focus

This research focuses on identifying and analyzing the role of gastrodiplomacy efforts in optimizing the sustainable tourism sector in Semarang City. The three food sectors studied are milkfish processing (Milkfish Cluster), herbal medicine processing (Jamu Cluster), and Lumpia Cluster. The three clusters were selected based on their culinary excellence in Semarang. Based on their history, arts and culture, and other factors, these three clusters contribute significantly to Semarang's gastrodiplomacy.

Research Data Sources

In qualitative research, researchers must identify potential data sources to answer research questions. Data sources are categorized into several groups, including: people, organizations, texts or articles, settings or environments, objects, and activities or events. The primary data sources in qualitative research are words and actions, with the remainder serving as supplementary data, such as documents and other sources. The words and actions of those observed or interviewed constitute the primary data source, captured through written notes, video/audio recordings, and photographs.

Data sources come from interviews with key informants. These key informants are members of the ABCGM (Academics, Business, Community, Government, and Media) elements. The academic element was selected from among those with expertise in food technology, culinary diplomacy, and related fields. Furthermore, in the business element,

the selected informants included business actors focused on processing soft-bone milkfish, herbal medicine, and spring rolls. On the community side, they also served as supervisors for the research implementation.

Meanwhile, the government element included relevant stakeholders in research, regional innovation development, fisheries, and the quality of processed fish products, among others. The media element came from parties that have a significant role in promoting local wisdom, food, arts and culture, and tourism in Semarang City. Supporting informants in this study provide information that complements that of the primary informants. Supporting informants include community members, local and village governments, tourists, and others.

This research focuses on identifying and analyzing the role of gastrodiploacy initiatives in optimizing sustainable tourism in Semarang City. The study specifically examines three prominent culinary clusters that represent the city's gastronomic identity: 1) Milkfish Processing Cluster (Bandeng Presto Cluster), 2) Herbal Medicine Processing Cluster (Jamu Cluster), and 3) Lumpia Cluster. These three clusters were selected based on their historical significance, cultural value, economic contribution, and recognition as iconic culinary products of Semarang. These culinary sectors play an important role in shaping the city's gastronomic identity and have strong potential to support gastrodiploacy initiatives that promote tourism and local culture.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques describe or explain how researchers collect data, tailored to the type of research being conducted. The techniques used to collect the data required in this study were interviews, observation, and documentation. Data collection techniques are crucial in any research project, as they require complete, accurate, factual, and accountable data. Without understanding data collection techniques, researchers will not obtain data that meets established data standards. The data collection techniques used in this study included interviews, observations, and documentation.

Data collection in this study includes in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation.

1. In-depth interviews

Semi -structured interviews were conducted with all informants to explore their perspectives on culinary tourism development, stakeholder collaboration, and the role of gastrodiploacy in promoting Semarang's tourism sector.

2. Observation

Direct observations were conducted in culinary production centers and tourist destinations to examine the interactions among culinary activities, tourism infrastructure, and visitor experiences.

3. Documentation

Documentation techniques were used to collect supporting materials, including photographs, policy documents, tourism development plans, promotional media, and archival records, related to Semarang's culinary and tourism sectors.

Data Validity Techniques

In qualitative research, data successfully extracted, collected, and recorded during the research process must be tested for validity and accuracy. Therefore, researchers must select and determine appropriate methods to establish the validity of the data obtained. The various data collection techniques must be appropriate and precise to obtain the data truly needed for the research. The implementation of these techniques

is based on several specific criteria. In this study, the validity and reliability of the data will be assessed by using source and technical triangulation techniques.

Source triangulation is the process of comparing and cross-checking the reliability of information obtained through different time periods and tools in qualitative research. This can be achieved, among other things, by comparing the results of interviews with one informant or source with those of another. Furthermore, this study uses technical triangulation to test the data's credibility by cross-checking it against the same source using different techniques.

Methodological triangulation was applied by comparing data obtained through different data collection techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. The use of multiple methods helped strengthen the validity of the findings and ensured that the data accurately reflected the research phenomenon.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study used the Miles & Huberman model. Several steps were taken in data analysis, namely: 1) Data reduction. Data reduction is carried out by identifying units. Once the smallest unit is obtained, the next step is coding. Coding means assigning a code to each "unit" so that the data/units can be traced to their source. Data coding plays a crucial role in qualitative research data analysis and determines the quality of the data abstraction. After coding, the researcher creates categories based on the interview results. 2) Data presentation. Data are obtained from various sources and then described using descriptive words or sentences, according to the qualitative approach used. In qualitative research, data are presented as brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts, and similar tools. 3) Drawing conclusions. Conclusions can be deemed credible if the researcher's initial conclusions are supported by valid, consistent evidence.

Results and discussions

Results

The research data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation with various key informants. On the government side, data were collected at the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office and the Semarang City Cooperatives and Micro Enterprises Office. This aimed to obtain accurate, comprehensive, and factual information and data, particularly regarding regulations and policies related to the development of the culinary and tourism sectors in Semarang City. In addition, data were collected from various relevant informants.

Milkfish Cluster

The Semarang City Milkfish Cluster was established based on Decree No. 050/174 of 2021 issued by the Head of the Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency concerning the Management of the Semarang City Local Economic Development (PEL) Milkfish Cluster for the 2021-2024 term. This group was formed as a PEL effort to accelerate SMEs and absorb labor, particularly in the milkfish fishery sector. To date, the Milkfish Cluster has more than 50 members spread across various areas of Semarang City. Each member entity operates several businesses/products, including soft-bone milkfish, grilled milkfish, steamed milkfish, tofu meatballs, and other dishes. This was done because, with the changing times, the public's need for varied food is not limited to soft-boned milkfish but also includes other products.

Product diversification and the development of various types of milkfish products also meet market demand. Specifically, for soft-boned milkfish, the food processing technology used is a pressure cooker. In addition, several cluster members are implementing other food technologies to extend shelf life and maintain product quality, including retort sterilization. Various parties, including the Semarang City Fisheries Service, academics, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) organizations, and others, are also involved in mentoring, training, and skills development. The background is that milkfish is a hallmark of Semarang City, so the optimization of its production and processing is also underway. In terms of marketing, processed products from the Milkfish Cluster also help enliven various tourist attractions and busy centers in Semarang City.

Herbal Medicine Cluster

The Head of the Semarang City Herbal Medicine Cluster, Wahyuni, who was also interviewed during May, stated that the cluster currently has only 20 active members. Wahyuni has served as cluster head since 2021, while her herbal medicine business began in 2010. The herbal medicines sold are in powdered, dry, and wet forms. The market share for powdered and dry herbal medicines extends beyond Semarang City, while the wet form is limited to the city due to its short shelf life. The average monthly turnover is 15-20 million rupiah, a figure that fluctuates. Wahyuni explained that there are peak periods, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, driven by high demand for herbs and herbal medicines. Since then, sales have fluctuated, leading to a downward trend.

Several stakeholders, including the Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), play a central role. Their efforts include providing training in business management and marketing, integrating with various government agencies, and other areas. In addition to the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Semarang City Cooperatives and Micro Enterprises Office also plays a role. These include training, participation in bazaars, seminars, workshops, and other activities that can support sustainable business revenue. The Semarang City Agriculture Office also plays a role in optimizing the development of the herbal medicine cluster by providing technical assistance, increasing production capacity, providing machinery support, and other forms of support. However, challenges persist regarding model costs and slow cash flow. As previously mentioned, herbal medicine sales are currently significantly lower than in 2020.

Lumpia Cluster

Based on an interview with the Head of the Semarang City Lumpia Cluster (Hendro), the cluster has 36 members. In Semarang City, there are 16 sub-districts, and two representatives from each sub-district serve on the *lumpia* cluster. So, a total of 32 people, then added new members, bringing the total to 36 (data as of May 1, 2025). This cluster was formed based on a Decree (SK) from the Semarang City Bappeda to facilitate the *lumpia* food-processing business sector, which produces souvenirs and gifts typical of Semarang City. The characteristic of Semarang City *lumpia* originated in the Chinatown area, with *pihi* fish filling. Kranggan Village in Central Semarang District was designated by the government as a center for *lumpia* skin production.



(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

Figure 3. Lumpia Skin Center in Kranggan Village, Semarang City

The advantage of *pihi* fish is its ability to neutralize the odor of bamboo shoots (urine) while also providing a distinct texture and flavor. Over time, various fillings have been added, including bamboo shoots, vegetables, meat, shrimp, dried shrimp, crab, and more. However, *lumpia* ideally only lasts 1-2 days at room temperature. Therefore, it is recommended to store it in the refrigerator/freezer to increase its shelf life. Furthermore, processed food in Semarang tends to be sweet. The cluster members' marketing reach includes Jakarta, Bandung, Lampung, Pati, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and other areas.

The average sales turnover of *lumpia* cluster members can reach approximately 30-60 million rupiah per month. The Semarang City Health Office has played a significant role in the cluster, particularly in terms of hygiene and food-processing health. The *lumpia* cluster frequently receives guidance on food safety. Meanwhile, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) also provides assistance, guidance, and training. The Semarang City Cooperative and Micro Enterprises Service also intensively provides assistance with business legality, such as Halal, NIB, P-IRT, and so on.

Stakeholder Collaboration in Culinary Tourism Development

The findings reveal that the development of culinary clusters in Semarang is strongly influenced by multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government institutions, business actors, communities, academics, and media. Government agencies such as Bappeda, the Tourism Office, the Fisheries Office, and the Cooperatives and MSME Office play important roles in providing training programs, regulatory support, and market facilitation. Business actors contribute through product innovation and market expansion, while academics provide technological assistance and research support. Media institutions help promote Semarang's culinary identity through digital platforms and tourism campaigns. This collaborative structure reflects the ABCGM (Academics, Business, Community, Government, Media) model, which forms the foundation for implementing gastrodiploacy strategies at the city level.

Stakeholder Collaboration in Culinary Tourism Development

The results indicate that Semarang has strong potential to develop a gastrodiploacy-based tourism model, owing to its distinctive culinary products, active culinary clusters, and stakeholder collaboration. However, several challenges remain, including limited integration between culinary clusters and tourism destinations, a lack of coordinated branding strategies for Semarang's culinary identity, uneven product standardization and

packaging quality, and limited international promotion of local culinary heritage. These findings highlight the need for a more integrated gastrodiploamacy framework that connects culinary heritage, tourism attractions, and stakeholder collaboration to enhance Semarang's global tourism competitiveness.

Discussions

Gastrodiploamacy is often conflated with culinary tourism, although the two concepts are distinct (Li & Mok, 2025). Gastrodiploamacy is a comprehensive culinary-based approach to attract or integrate with various aspects, from economic growth to tourism development. The goal is to introduce, increase, and promote a region through culinary channels. The concept of gastrodiploamacy in Semarang City, for example, integrates various aspects, including transportation, tourism, culinary arts, and other fields. This concept not only concerns national interests but also has implications for international policy (Yayusman et al., 2023). In this context, gastrodiploamacy serves not only as a promotional tool for food products but also as a strategic approach to enhance regional image and attract tourists through authentic culinary experiences.

The benefits of gastrodiploamacy are complex, ranging from economic growth and investment to community empowerment, increased food productivity, and accelerated tourism development. Therefore, optimizing humanistic and dynamic gastrodiploamacy is key to the success of culinary-based tourism development (Lee & Kim, 2021). The provision of facilities, accessibility, and mobility is integral to gastrodiploamacy. Easier access, communication, and public support facilities will increase interest in gastrodiploamacy transactions.

Optimizing gastrodiploamacy in Semarang City cannot be achieved without synergy and collaboration with various stakeholders. This synergy is not only national but also international, as a form of gastrodiploamacy expansion. Various stakeholders, including the central and regional governments, business actors, the community, and companies, must work together to optimize the role of gastrodiploamacy in Semarang City. Gastrodiploamacy can also be implemented during various activities, including festivals, bazaars, cultural discussions, and more (Eser & Karaosmanoğlu, 2024). Such activities create opportunities for tourists to experience culinary products directly and strengthen the narrative of local cultural identity. Each stakeholder plays a different, complementary role across the three culinary clusters.

In the three culinary clusters, government institutions such as the Fisheries Service and Bappeda play a strategic role in cluster formation, training, and technological assistance. Candra & Setiawan (2013) stated that the Fisheries Service had provided assistance in the form of grants for processing equipment, particularly for milkfish products. Academics and CSR organizations contribute through mentoring and capacity building, while business actors focus on product diversification and market expansion. The community supports production activities and local branding, while media channels promote milkfish as Semarang's culinary identity. According to Akalili et al. (2025), culinary promotion, such as content creation that presents a complete narrative, street food, and the product manufacturing process, has its own appeal for audiences, encouraging them to try authentic local foods and even visit the area in person. That approach allows audiences not only to recognize local foods but also to develop emotional connections that motivate them to visit the destination.

The result also reveals that the implementation of gastrodiploamacy in Semarang remains fragmented and has not yet been integrated into a comprehensive tourism development strategy. Culinary products are still largely positioned as souvenirs or commercial products, rather than being fully integrated into tourism narratives and

destination experiences. This condition reflects the theoretical gap identified in the gastrodiploacy literature, where many studies focus primarily on national-level culinary diplomacy and offer limited analysis of city-level gastrodiploacy models linked to sustainable tourism systems.

One important finding of this study is the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in supporting the development of gastrodiploacy. The results show that the development of culinary clusters in Semarang involves various actors within the ABCGM framework (Academics, Business, Community, Government, and Media). Government institutions such as the Semarang City Fisheries Office and the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) play strategic roles in facilitating cluster formation, providing training, and supporting technological innovation. Similar findings were also reported by Candra and Setiawan (2013), who emphasized the role of government assistance programs in improving the productivity and competitiveness of small-scale culinary industries.

Despite these opportunities, several structural challenges remain in optimizing gastrodiploacy in Semarang. These challenges include limited integration between culinary clusters and tourism destinations, uneven product standardization and packaging quality, and the absence of a coordinated city branding strategy centered on culinary identity. These findings indicate that gastrodiploacy in Semarang requires a more integrated framework that connects culinary production systems with tourism infrastructure, transportation accessibility, and cultural promotion.

From a sustainable tourism perspective, gastrodiploacy can function as a strategic instrument to strengthen local economies, empower communities, and preserve cultural heritage. The development of culinary clusters contributes not only to economic growth through MSME activities but also to the preservation of traditional food knowledge and cultural practices. This aligns with the concept of human-centered tourism, which emphasizes the involvement of local communities as active participants in tourism development.

Based on these findings, this study proposes that the optimization of gastrodiploacy in Semarang should be built upon three key components: culinary identity, stakeholder collaboration, and integrated tourism systems. By integrating these components, gastrodiploacy can serve as a comprehensive strategy that links local culinary heritage to tourism promotion and sustainable economic development. Therefore, the proposed gastrodiploacy model highlights the importance of synergy between culinary clusters, tourism destinations, transportation accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. Such integration enables Semarang to strengthen its destination branding, enhance tourist experiences, and increase its competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Conclusions

In this study, gastrodiploacy manifests as food- and culinary-sector diplomacy. Specifically, in Semarang City, the government has sought to implement its gastrodiploacy program by establishing several community groups operating in the food and food-related sectors, including the Milkfish Cluster, the Herbal Medicine Cluster, and the Lumpia Cluster. These three clusters have distinct roles, duties, functions, and responsibilities in the conduct of gastrodiploacy. The Milkfish Cluster plays a role in promoting the fisheries sector's potential, particularly milkfish, which is abundant in Semarang's coastal areas. It not only engages in the buying and selling of fresh fish but also processes and diversifies milkfish products into various dishes such as soft-bone grilled milkfish, steamed milkfish, tofu, milkfish meatballs, etc.

Meanwhile, the Lumpia Cluster promotes the history, art, and culture of *lumpia* from its inception in Semarang to the present day, serving as a landmark and a leading souvenir of the city. Long story short, *lumpia* was originally sold in Semarang's Chinatown area. This tradition has continued and been passed down from generation to generation. Lumpia variations are also very diverse, with fillings including bamboo shoots, vegetables, noodles, fish, and other fillings. This reflects the creativity and innovation of entrepreneurs without diminishing the *lumpia*'s artistic and cultural significance. Furthermore, there is a herbal medicine cluster that conducts Semarang's gastrodiploacy based on spices produced in the agricultural sector. Businesses in the herbal medicine cluster strive to practice culinary diplomacy grounded in local wisdom and to utilize the abundance of medicinal plants in Semarang.

Beyond their individual roles, the findings highlight the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government institutions, business actors, communities, academics, and media within the ABCGM framework. This collaboration supports capacity building, product development, marketing strategies, and regulatory facilitation for culinary businesses. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including limited integration between culinary clusters and tourism destinations, uneven product standardization, and the absence of a coordinated city-branding strategy grounded in culinary identity.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of gastrodiploacy literature by proposing a city-level gastrodiploacy model that integrates culinary identity, stakeholder collaboration, and tourism systems. Unlike previous studies that often focus on national culinary diplomacy, this research highlights the role of local culinary clusters as strategic actors in strengthening destination branding and sustainable tourism development. The proposed gastrodiploacy model emphasizes integrating culinary heritage, tourism destinations, transportation accessibility, and digital promotion strategies to create a comprehensive tourism ecosystem. Through this integrated approach, gastrodiploacy can function not only as a cultural promotion tool but also as a strategic instrument for sustainable tourism development, local economic growth, and community empowerment.

Practically, the findings suggest that policymakers in Semarang should strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, improve product standardization and packaging quality, and integrate culinary promotion with tourism destination management. The development of culinary festivals, storytelling-based marketing, and digital promotion can further enhance the visibility of Semarang's gastronomic identity at the national and international levels. Future research may expand this study by examining the implementation of gastrodiploacy strategies in other cities or by employing mixed-method approaches to quantitatively measure the impact of gastrodiploacy on tourism competitiveness and visitor behavior.

References

- Akalili, A., Audrey, A.T., Wiryawan, Y. G. (2025). Digital Branding of Tourism Promotion: Gastrodiploacy In The Digital Age. *Informasi*, 55(2), 163-172. <https://doi.org/10.21831/informasi.v55i2.89630>.
- Anggraini, H. Y., & Pujiati, A. (2022). The Influence of the Tourism Sector and GRDP on Poverty. *Efficient: Indonesian Journal of Development Economics*, 5(2), 174-181. <https://doi.org/10.15294/efficient.v5i2.51092>.

- Aprilia, S., & Priantina, A. (2022). Analisa strategi peningkatan sertifikasi halal sektor kuliner di Bangka Selatan. *International Journal Mathla'ul Anwar of Halal Issues*, 2(1), 50-71. <https://doi.org/10.30653/ijma.202221.46>.
- Astuti, A., Mulianingsih, F., Pujiati, A., & Krismawanto, A. H. (2023). A Study on the Impact of Globalization on MSMEs in Indonesia. *Journal of Management and Business Environment (JMBE)*, 5(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.24167/jmbe.v5i1.5865>.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Semarang. (2023). *Kota Semarang Dalam Angka 2023*. Semarang: BPS Kota Semarang.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Republik Indonesia. (2023). *Statistik Indonesia 2023*. Jakarta: BPS Indonesia.
- Brahmanto, E. (2022). Gastronomi Lawang Sewu dan Lumpia Sebagai Icon Kota Semarang Jawa Tengah. *Khasanah Ilmu: Jurnal Pariwisata dan Budaya*, 13(1), 74-80. <https://doi.org/10.31294/khi.v13i1.12427>.
- Burhanudin, B., & Unnithan, A. B. (2022). The determinants of eco-friendly tourist behaviour: Perspectives from Indian and Indonesian tourists travelling abroad. *Anatolia*, 33(1), 48-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2021.1905014>.
- Candra, A. N., Setiawan, A. H., (2013). Analisis Propsek dan Perkembangan Usaha Industri Bandeng Presto di Kota Semarang. *Diponegoro Journal of Economics*, 2(1), 1-11. <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jme/article/view/1963/1961>
- Demir, M., & Alper, P. (2021). G20 summit menus as a means of gastrodiplomacy: Messages to the world via menus. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 25, 100368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2021.100368>.
- Eser, B., & Karaosmanoğlu, D. (2024). Gastrodiplomacy in Turkey: 'saving the world' or neoliberal conservative cultural policies at work. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 30(2), 192-206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2183951>.
- Fafurida, F., Oktavilia, S., Prajanti, S. D. W., & Maretta, Y. A. (2020). Tourism and economic development in Indonesia. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 9(3), 6476-6479. <https://doi.org/10.15294/edaj.v11i1.50009>.
- Lee, S. T., & Kim, H. S. (2021). Food fight: gastrodiplomacy and nation branding in Singapore's UNESCO bid to recognize Hawker culture. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 17(2), 205-217. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-020-00166-3>.
- Li, G., & Mok, K. (2025). More than two decades of gastrodiplomacy: a review of the concept, current characteristics, and future trends. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 7, 1659162. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1659162>.
- Nair, B. B. (2021). Gastrodiplomacy in tourism: 'Capturing hearts and minds through stomachs'. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems*, 14(1), 30-40. <http://www.publishingindia.com/ijhts/24/gastrodiplomacy-in-tourism-capturing-hearts-and-minds-through-stomachs/897/6182/>.
- Nugroho, S. P., Susilowati, H., Istiraharsi, Y. (2023). Wisata Gastronomi Makanan Tradisional Yogyakarta Melalui Storynomic. *Media Wisata*, 21(2), 340-359. <https://doi.org/10.36276/mws.v21i2.524>.
- Prajanti, S. D. W., Daud, D., Litaay, C., Widiatningrum, T., & Amelia, D. R. (2023). Strategic Development Model for The Local Wisdom Based Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs): Using Analytical Hierarchy Process Approach. *International Business and Accounting Research Journal*, 7(2), 136-154. <https://dx.doi.org/10.35474/ibarj.v7i2.257>.
- Prasetyo, P. E., Pujiati, A., Setyadharma, A., & Kistanti, N. R. (2022). The Spirit of Social Entrepreneurship and Institutional Environment as Drives of Sustainable Economic

- Growth. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & Planning*, 17(8). <https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.170816>.
- Pujiati, A., & Imron, M. (2020). The effect of industrial existence on the environment and socio-economy. *Economics Development Analysis Journal*, 9(1), 12-22. <https://doi.org/10.15294/edaj.v9i1.37261>.
- Pujiati, A., Nihayah, D. M., & Setiyani, R. (2016). Rambutan Commodity Development Strategy as Regional Potential Product. *JEJAK*, 9(1), 50-61. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jejak.v9i1.6654>.
- Pujiati, A., Nihayah, D. M., Adzim, F., & Nikensari, S. I. (2020). Implementation of sustainable transportation using gap analysis: Case study of semarang city. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(7), 47-54. <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.07.09>.
- Pujiati, A., Putra, T. A., & Damayanti, N. (2022). Is There A Trade-Off Between Economic and Environmental Factors in Traditional Oil Mine Management?. *Finance, Accounting and Business Analysis (FABA)*, 4(2), 137-147. <https://faba.bg/index.php/faba/article/view/142>.
- Pujiati, A., Yanto, H., Dwi Handayani, B., Ridzuan, A. R., Borhan, H., & Shaari, M. S. (2023). The detrimental effects of dirty energy, foreign investment, and corruption on environmental quality: New evidence from Indonesia. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 10, 1074172. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fenvs.2022.1074172>.
- Rachmadi, M. F., & Prajanti, S. D. W. (2023). Optimizing Digital Literacy in Increasing Competitive Advantage and Corporate Performance. *Dinamika Pendidikan*, 18(2), 220-231. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jeec.v13i1.28332>.
- Ramadhani, K., Liliawati, M., Maulidina, R., Nuryana, I., Nihayah, D., M. (2025). Desa Wisata Indonesia (Transformasi Ekonomi Berbasis Asset-Based Community Development Menuju Swasembada). *JIA (Jurnal Ilmiah Agribisnis): Jurnal Agribisnis dan Ilmu Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian*, 10(3), 232-243. <https://doi.org/10.37149/jia.v10i3.1969>.
- Setiono, S. T., Afrizal, T., Supriyono, E., Wendra, R. M., & Nurfitriani, A. (2021). Implementasi Pengelolaan Pariwisata Berkelanjutan Di Kota Semarang. *Perspektif*, 10(1), 26-35. <https://doi.org/10.31289/perspektif.v10i1.3943>.
- Septada, B. I., Herawati, A. R., Maesaroh (2023). Analisis Pelayanan BRT Trans Semarang di Kota Semarang. *Journal of Management & Policy*, 12(3), 926-937. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jppmr.v12i3.40071>.
- Sifa, A. P., Fajariandi, A. G., Irawan, J. A., & Rahayu, E. (2023). Community economic recovery through the collaboration with tourist rickshaws in the old city of semarang. *Journal of Gastro Tourism*, 1(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.52465/jogasto.v1i1.122>.
- Stankov, U., & Gretzel, U. (2020). Tourism 4.0 technologies and tourist experiences: a human-centered design perspective. *Information Technology & Tourism*, (22), 277-288. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00186-y>.
- Tunisia, A. F., Safitri, D., Parantika, A. (2023). Pengembangan Potensi Atraksi Wisata Gastronomi di Desa Cililin Kabupaten Bandung Barat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 9(7), 103-109. <https://doi.org/10.24843/JUMPA.2019.v06.i01.p05>.
- Widowati, W., Retnoningsih, A., Pujiati, A., Astutik, J., Marlengen, R., & Aryoso, I. S. (2022). Increasing Sales Omzet of Plant Waste Based Home Industry Through Product Development and Marketing. *Indonesian Journal of Devotion and Empowerment*, 4(2), 28-34. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijde.v4i2.66433>.
- Yanto, H., Pujiati, A., Handayani, B. D., Ridzuan, A. R., Keshminder, J. S., & Rachman, M. A. (2024). Good Government Governance as a Moderator in Achieving

- Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesia. *Planning*, 19(2), 715-722.
<https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.190228>.
- Yayusman, M. S., Yaumidin, U. K., & Mulyasari, P. N. (2023). On considering Australia: exploring Indonesian restaurants in promoting ethnic foods as an instrument of Indonesian gastrodiploamacy. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 10(1), 43.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00207-1>.