

GASTRODIPLOMACY OF BANDUNG CITY IN ADVANCING MSMEs BY UTILIZING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Diplomacy has evolved with the rise of soft power, shifting from reliance on military and economic strength to more variative approaches like gastrodiploMACy. This study explores the role of micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSMEs) as key actors in Bandung's gastrodiploMACy efforts, emphasizing the integration of digital transformation to enhance these initiatives. The research aims to identify the strategic opportunities and challenges faced by Bandung's MSMEs in promoting local culinary culture globally through gastrodiploMACy and digital tools. Using a qualitative research method, data was collected through internet-based research and literature reviews. The findings reveal that Bandung has implemented strategic gastrodiploMACy initiatives, such as Little Bandung digital platform and international collaborations like sister-city partnerships and participation in events such as MIHAS. These efforts have expanded market access and increased the global visibility of Bandung's culinary heritage. However, challenges like environmental concerns, regulatory barriers, and market adaptation persist. Despite these obstacles, the study highlights significant potential for Bandung to transform challenges into opportunities, including the adoption of eco-friendly packaging, integration of international payment systems like QRIS, and improved digital literacy programs. The impact of this research lies in its contribution to understanding how digital transformation and MSMEs can synergize to strengthen gastrodiploMACy, offering actionable insights for policymakers, business actors, and stakeholders to enhance Bandung's culinary diplomacy sustainably and effectively.

Keywords: Bandung City, Digital Transformation, GastrodiploMACy, MSME.

INTRODUCTION

The scope of diplomacy has evolved by targeting foreign tourists as an implementation of the soft power concept. Diplomacy serves as a bridge for interaction in each nation's approach while also fulfilling national interests. Food is one of the aspects that plays a role in this process. Although it may seem trivial and insignificant, food functions as a powerful tool for expressing influence, sharing cultural values, and conveying messages of friendship or conflict. Over time, it has grown into a significant element of public diplomacy strategies worldwide (Luša, Đ., & Jakešević, R. 2017). Food has the potential to influence many people in the simplest way (Salleh, F. M. 2015). Diplomacy no longer relies solely on military or economic power (hard power) but has developed through a more subtle cultural approach, such as gastrodiploamacy. Gastrodiploamacy is a strategy employed by a region to leverage its culinary wealth in diplomatic efforts, introducing and promoting the identity and image of a nation on the international stage (Suntikul 2017 in White et al., 2019). Through food, a country or region can foster stronger connections with the global community while simultaneously introducing its local culture. Bandung, often recognized as a creative city, is also referred to as the "Paris van Java" due to its atmosphere and climate, which resemble those of Paris, France. This reputation has been reinforced by the high number of tourists visiting the city, attracted by its various tourist destinations (Rustandi et al., 2019). According to *opendata.bandung.go.id* (2024), the number of tourists visiting Bandung has reached over 4.3 million. This continuous influx of visitors highlights Bandung's potential for gastrodiploamacy. Bandung is one of the cities in West Java Province, with a population of approximately 2,530,448 (Disdukcapil Kota Bandung, 2025). This significant population contributes to the city's rich culinary diversity, reflecting the cultural heritage and innovation of its people.

With its diverse culinary offerings, ranging from traditional dishes such as batagor, seblak, cuanki, siomay, and various starch-based delicacies (*per-acian*), Bandung's cuisine is not only a local culinary icon but also holds significant potential for international recognition. Additionally, the creativity of Bandung's residents in developing modern culinary innovations further positions the city as a representation of Indonesia's rich gastronomic heritage on the global stage. Moreover, the culinary sector in Bandung is predominantly driven by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), providing economic benefits to the local community (Herindra et al., 2024). With the increasing accessibility of promotional platforms, the growing digital landscape enables MSME entrepreneurs to leverage digital transformation to better understand market dynamics and enhance their competitiveness. By shifting business strategies toward digitalization, these enterprises can strengthen their market presence and gain a competitive advantage (Putra et al., 2023).

The trend of digitalization can no longer be ignored (Putra et al., 2023). With continuous advancements in digital technology, individuals are inevitably required to adapt and learn how to access these technologies. In an era of globalization that emphasizes free markets and technological progress, various aspects of life must adapt to the demands of digital transformation. It is undeniable that digital transformation plays a crucial role in driving global economic development, including in Indonesia. Consequently, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have adopted and leveraged digital technology, particularly in online marketing, to enhance their competitiveness and expand market reach (Galib et al., 2024). Modern technologies are growing more complex and interconnected than ever. Financial transactions, in particular, now depend heavily on advanced computer software (Wolff, J. 2021), prompting various sectors to transition towards digital transformation. In this context, economic activities have gradually shifted toward digital-based operations. This includes cashless payments through e-money or mobile banking (m-banking) (Sitanggang et al., 2024) and online promotions utilizing social media platforms to attract market attention (Widodo et al., 2024), among other innovations.

To understand the strategies adopted by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in leveraging digital transformation, this study refers to previous research relevant to the topic. First, prior studies have examined Indonesia's and West Java's gastrodiploamacy efforts in promoting their regional culinary heritage to shape the image of a country or region through food (Primawanti et al., 2024; Yayusman et al., 2023; Yayusman, M. S., & Mulyasari,

P. N., 2024; Baskoro, 2022). Second, previous research has explored digitalization as a means to promote MSME culinary businesses in Bandung (Anggia et al., 2020). However, existing studies have primarily focused on gastrodiploamacy in a broad context, covering Indonesia and West Java, without specifically addressing Bandung. Additionally, there has been a lack of discussion on how gastrodiploamacy integrates digital transformation and involves MSMEs in its implementation. Therefore, this study will focus on two key aspects: the process of gastrodiploamacy through MSMEs in Bandung and the role of digital technology in Bandung's gastrodiploamacy efforts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of *soft power* is one of the most widely recognized concepts in international relations. The term gained popularity after Joseph Nye, a scientist of political science unveiled it (Saaida, M. 2023). Joseph Nye, a distinguished expert in International Relations, described soft power as "the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than a force or financial incentives." (Santos, 2021). Consequently, military and economic power are no longer the primary means of shaping a country's or region's image in the international arena. The emergence of *soft power* has provided nations and regions with alternative approaches to constructing their global image, one of which is through cultural diplomacy (Trisni, S., & Putri, A. 2023). This shift has led to various alternative diplomatic strategies, including diplomacy through culture. As a result, cultural issues have increasingly become a focal point in diplomacy to shape national identity on the global stage. Therefore, the discussion on Bandung's gastrodiploamacy in advancing MSMEs by leveraging digital transformation can be analyzed through the foundational concept of *soft power*, with gastrodiploamacy serving as its practical implementation in the evolving landscape of modern diplomacy.

The next concept to be thoroughly discussed is gastrodiploamacy. The methods to gain international interests has shifted from *hard power* to *soft power* (Trisni et al., 2019), serving as a driving force behind cultural diplomacy and emerging as a branch of public diplomacy. This shift is regarded as an effective alternative that utilizes food to build national identity and enhance public understanding of a nation's culture (Muljabar, H. 2024). The primary focus of gastrodiploamacy is how a country or region promotes its image and gains global recognition for its cuisine while fostering relationships with foreign audiences (Octastefani & Kusuma, 2022). As a form of public diplomacy, gastrodiploamacy integrates cultural diplomacy, culinary diplomacy, and nation branding to allow foreign audiences to experience and connect with a country's culture. Rockower (2012; 2020) describes Indonesian *spice-based* gastrodiploamacy as offering food (culinary) as a key element in diplomatic practices (Yayusman & Mulyasari, 2024). Gastrodiploamacy serves as a subtle strategy to capture global attention through cuisine (Dewi et al., 2022). Public culture incorporates food as a fundamental aspect of a region's identity, making diplomacy no longer monopolized by the state but also involving *non-state actors* such as food companies, celebrities, chefs, and other individuals (Cho, 2006 in Octastefani & Kusuma, 2022). This study particularly focuses on the role of *Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises* (MSMEs) in gastrodiploamacy. The participation of culinary MSMEs in gastrodiploamacy has a significant impact (Safitri, 2024) in shaping Bandung's identity through its distinctive culinary flavors. Moreover, MSMEs play a crucial role in national economic development (Arifin et al., 2021).

In the current era of globalization, people have become increasingly familiar with advancing technology. As a result, many individuals utilize technological advancements through social media and other digital platforms to communicate messages to their audiences. The digital era has expanded the participation of individuals in shaping and disseminating soft power while also providing opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to organize politically, both domestically and internationally (Rawnsley, 2024). In a political culture that values, tolerates, and expects criticism and differing opinions, the presence of civil society serves as a reflection of a group's autonomy. This has led to the widespread use of digitalization for promotional activities, as it has the potential to reach a broader audience. According to BRIN (2024), Indonesia has taken steps to promote gastrodiploamacy by involving

local culinary entrepreneurs. This initiative has been undertaken by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supported by several other ministries, in the creation of Indonesia's gastrodiploacy dashboard as a platform to facilitate culinary diplomacy efforts. Gastrodiploacy recognizes the opportunities presented by digital transformation as a means to expand its audience reach to the international stage. Based on the theoretical frameworks discussed above, this study employs the concepts of *soft power*, *gastrodiploacy*, and *digital transformation* to examine how MSMEs in Bandung utilize digital products to promote their culinary offerings within the framework of gastrodiploacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research method (Creswell, 2009:4 in Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019), which aims to identify and understand the meaning of social or humanitarian issues for individuals or specific groups. Qualitative method is a research approach that seeks to understand social and cultural phenomena from the participants' perspective that emphasizing the collection of descriptive rather than numerical data (Susanto et al., 2024). The research data is collected through secondary data collection obtained via literature review, utilizing both internet research and library research. The researcher relies on credible written sources such as books, scientific journals, official government documents, and reputable news portals discussing gastrodiploacy and the use of digital transformation by MSMEs in Indonesia to reach international markets. Additionally, document-based research is conducted to complement the study, incorporating documents that contain relevant information on the discussed topic. According to Lamont, these documents can be categorized into primary source documents and secondary source documents. Meanwhile, Piergiorgio Corbetta classifies documents into personal documents, which include oral testimonies and social media traces, and institutional documents, which refer to company records or other public institution documents (Bakry, Umar Suryadi, 2016).

DISCUSSION

The Strategy of Bandung City in Conducting Gastrodiploacy by Utilizing Digital Transformation

As a form of soft power, culinary has a role in diplomacy where culinary creates a deep and memorable experience for the global community. According to Trihartono et al. (2020), gastrodiploacy utilizes culinary as an effective nonverbal communication tool to improve international understanding and cooperation. Foods or culinary reflect the identities and culture of a country. By introducing a typical culinary of a country to an international world, foreign society can understand values, traditions and the history of a country attached to the food. History of gastrodiploacy Indonesia cannot be separated from the role of spices which have always been a valuable commodity in the world (Adawiyah & Rais, 2023).

Since the 2nd century BCE, the Nusantara archipelago has been renowned as a major source of spices sought after by traders from various parts of the world, including China, India, the Arab world, and Europe. The spice route became a key trade network, with Arab merchants controlling the distribution of spices to Europe until the 14th century, before European powers such as the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch took over. In the 7th century, the Sriwijaya Kingdom emerged as a major trading hub for spices, attracting Muslim traders from India and the Arab world. The Syailendra Dynasty in the 8th century also maintained diplomatic access to the international spice trade. By the 12th century, the increasing demand for spices due to the Crusades further strengthened the Nusantara region's role in supplying these commodities. Entering the 17th century, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) monopolized the spice trade and the sugar industry in the region. In the 18th century, colonialism introduced European-style gastronomy, such as the *rijsttafel*, which combined indigenous cuisine with European presentation aesthetics. This influence continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, when the acculturation of Javanese and Dutch cuisine shaped the culinary identity of Indonesia (Baskoro, 2022).

Indonesia has implemented various strategies in conducting gastrodiploacy to introduce its national cuisine

to the international community. Indonesia's gastrodiploamcy efforts after independence began during the era of President Soekarno. In 1960, Soekarno instructed the Minister of Agriculture, Azis Saleh, to compile a cookbook featuring Nusantara cuisine as an effort to establish a national culinary identity. After a lengthy process, the *Mustika Rasa* cookbook was finally published in 1967, becoming one of the government's gastrodiploamcy strategies to promote and solidify Indonesia's rich culinary heritage (Baskoro, 2022). Subsequently, during President Soeharto's administration, the government intervened to ensure national food stability by promoting rice consumption on a large scale. However, a particularly notable development was the emergence of instant noodles as a national food, widely accepted across various social groups. This was closely linked to the U.S. food aid program, which provided wheat to Indonesia. This supply was utilized by PT Bogasari to establish a wheat milling plant, which later contributed to the rise of PT Indofood Sukses Makmur, the producer of *Indomie* instant noodles. Over time, *Indomie* not only became a staple in Indonesia but was also exported to numerous countries, particularly in Africa (Baskoro, 2022).

In 2022, CNN Travel released a list of the *World's 50 Best Foods*, in which *rendang* ranked first and *nasi goreng* ranked second. This recognition marked a turning point in the global promotion of Indonesian cuisine, fostering a sense of pride among Indonesians for their traditional foods and subsequently encouraging more initiatives to introduce Nusantara cuisine to the world. Various culinary exhibitions were organized abroad by the Indonesian diaspora, student organizations, and the government as part of culinary diplomacy efforts. The Ministry of Tourism also designated five national dishes—*rendang*, *sate*, *nasi goreng*, *soto*, and *gado-gado*—as part of its strategy to attract foreign tourists. Furthermore, in an effort to revive the historical significance of Indonesia's spice trade, the government launched an initiative called *Spices Up the World* in 2021. This program, spearheaded by the Directorate General of Culture under the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*), aimed to reconstruct the Nusantara spice route with the goal of introducing Indonesia's spice heritage to the international stage (Baskoro, 2022).

As digital technology continues to advance, Indonesia has become increasingly active in utilizing digital media to implement its gastrodiploamcy on the international stage. This is reflected in several initiatives undertaken by the government, one of which is the *Indonesia Spice Up The World* (ISUTW) campaign. This campaign adopts a media relations strategy aligned with the research of Juyan Zhang (2015), wherein the Indonesian government collaborates with Google to develop a dedicated website with a webpage titled *Spice Up The World* (<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/indonesian-gastronomy>). This platform provides information on the history of the spice route, the role of spices in Nusantara culture, and the impact of Indonesian spices on global civilization. The campaign also utilizes hashtags to enhance the dissemination of information about Indonesian spices across various social media platforms. Additionally, it leverages YouTube as a primary medium for distributing promotional videos. These videos include documentaries on the spice route, narratives of communities engaged in the spice industry, and Indonesian cuisine that incorporates various spices. Digital advertisements on YouTube are also employed with the objective of reaching a global audience (Parmato et al., 2023).

The city of Bandung has made strategic efforts to make gastrodiploamcy by utilizing digital transformation. This effort is made by integrating various technological innovations in introducing the typical Bandung culinary to the international market, especially through cooperation of sisters city with Petaling Jaya, Malaysia in the field of trade economies. According to the Chief, sub section of the administration, documentation, and the evaluation of SETDA Bandung City's cooperation, there are programs created to support the cooperation of the sister city Bandung with Petaling Jaya, namely the "Little Bandung" program. This program also certainly supports the City of Bandung in conducting gastrodiploamcy by helping MSMEs in Bandung City to improve its product competitions while restricting Bandung culinary products through the international trade economy, so that not only the domestic market level but also reaches global markets (Anggia, Rohayatin, & F, 2020). This program is certainly inseparable from digital transformation, this is shown by creating a website "Little Bandung" (<https://littlebandung.com/>). On this website there is a catalog that allows the global market to access culinary products from MSME Bandung. gastrodiploamcy Bandung City's strategy through its "Little Bandung" program has had a significant impact on

MSMEs in Bandung. In the fifth edition of the Little Bandung Little MSMEs, it is described that Mones Chocolate and Andhika Chips successfully expanded their market to the international level. With support from the "Little Bandung" program, Mones Chocolate managed to participate in the MIHAS event (Malaysian Halal Showcase) in Kuala Lumpur which is the main gateway for Bandung products to penetrate the Malaysian market. "Little Bandung" also brought together Andhika chips with global consumers, especially with consumers in South Korea.

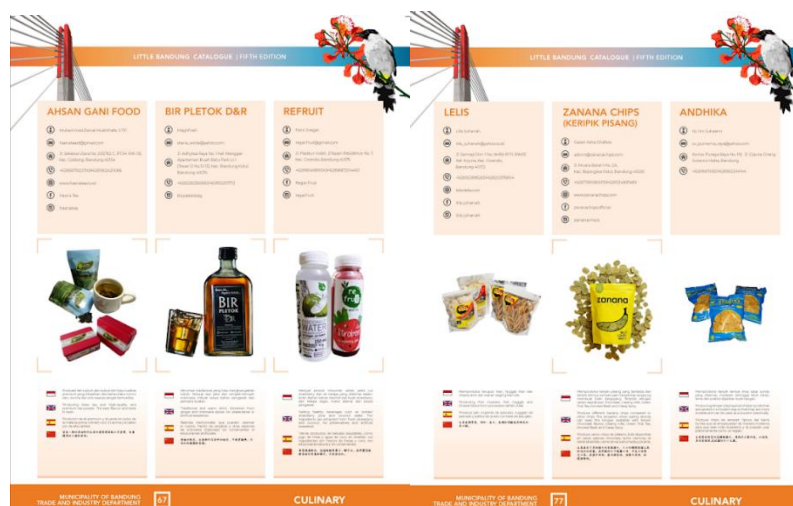


Figure 1. 5th Edition Little Bandung Culinary Catalogue.

Source: <https://littlebandung.com/>

As displayed in **Figure 1**, The gastrodiploacy strategy of Bandung City through the *Little Bandung* program serves as a crucial initiative in introducing Bandung's culinary identity to the international market. This program not only functions as a digital marketing tool through its website but also acts as a diplomatic platform connecting Bandung's MSMEs with global consumers. By leveraging digital transformation, the *Little Bandung* program enhances the accessibility of Bandung's culinary products in the international market through its official website, which provides a curated catalog of high-quality products, allowing international buyers to access information and place orders. Additionally, this program strengthens connectivity with the Indonesian diaspora in various countries to boost demand for Bandung's signature culinary offerings. With the increasing export of Bandung's culinary products and their growing presence in the global market, this initiative also enhances the city's culinary tourism appeal, attracting international tourists to visit Bandung and experience its distinctive cuisine firsthand.

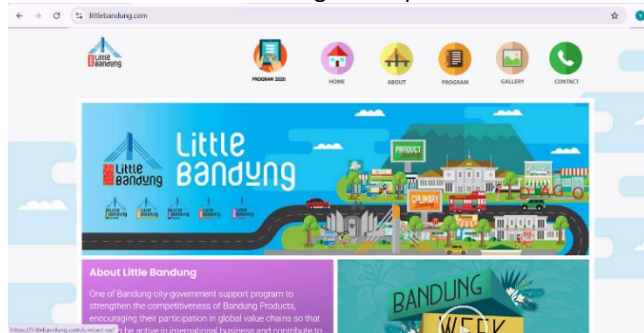


Figure 2. Little Bandung Official Website

Source: <https://littlebandung.com/>

In addition as displayed in figure 2, the gastrodiploamacy Kota Bandung is also reflected in the participation of products from Bandung City, namely Preanger Delight at the international festival of Melbourne Food and Wine Festival carried out on March 22-23, 2025, which was the unique culinary promotion of Pasundan to the global market. This international festival serves as a strategic stage to introduce local material-based culinary innovations, namely cilembu sweet potatoes which are a culinary product of creative economic actors from the city of Bandung, to a wider international market. By performing at this festival, Bandung City products are not only marketed, but also bring cultural narratives that introduce uniqueness and wealth of Indonesian culinary, especially Bandung City. The success of Preanger Delight to penetrate this festival shows that innovation in processing and food presentation techniques can increase local culinary competitiveness at the global level. In addition, participation in the festival provides an opportunity for creative economy actors to build a network with the world's culinary industry, opening the potential for business cooperation, market expansion, and cultural exchange. Thus, the international festival is not only a product exhibition, but also an effective strategy in strengthening Bandung culinary identity as part of Indonesian cultural diplomacy.

The gastrodiploamacy Bandung City strategy is not only carried out through participation in the international festival, but also through the exports of local culinary products. One example of the success of this strategy is the export of spicy culinary chips from Bandung is the Maich chips to various countries via Shopee. As the iconic product from Bandung, Maich has utilized the development of digital technology in the form of e-commerce to reach overseas markets, allowing global consumers to enjoy typical Indonesian culinary without having to visit the country directly. Like via Shopee Malaysia (<https://shopee.com.my/maichofficialshop.my>), Shopee Singapore (<https://shopee.sg/maichofficialshop.sg>), Shopee Philippines (<https://shopee.ph/maichofficialshop.ph>), and Shopee Thailand via reseller ([Basreng-\(-Baso-Goreng\)-Pedas-Spicy-Maich-100-gram](#)). The use of shopee as an export platform provides broader and efficient access for local products, with logistics systems that support distribution to various countries. This strategy also shows how digitalization in trade can be an effective gastrodiploamacy tool, introducing a distinctive Bandung flavor to the international world without geographic boundaries. With this approach, the Bandung City can strengthen its culinary position in the global arena.

Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Bandung City in Implementing Gastrodiploamacy in the Digital Era

The Indonesian government has indeed implemented various initiatives to popularize Indonesian cuisine through gastrodiploamacy, employing diverse strategies. However, previous research has highlighted that many of these efforts tend to be seasonal, resulting in Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy potential remaining underutilized (Prameswari, N. K., & Yani, Y., 2023). There are still numerous opportunities to be explored in advancing Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy. Moreover, digitalization has now facilitated various aspects of business and communication. The presence of e-commerce, social media platforms for promoting product content, and digital payment systems should accelerate the development of Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy to advance MSMEs (Kilay, A., Simamora, B., & Putra, D. 2022). Therefore, this study provides an analysis of the opportunities and challenges in implementing gastrodiploamacy in the digital era, specifically within the context of Bandung City.

Gastrodiploamacy can be driven by both state and non-state actors. State actors, such as the central and local governments, generally conduct gastrodiploamacy through culinary events held abroad or by organizing national culinary events that attract international tourists. Unfortunately, there has not yet been a dedicated event initiated by the Bandung City government as a form of gastrodiploamacy. On the other hand, non-state actors, including business groups, influencers, mass media, the diaspora, and even civil society, tend to engage in more sustainable forms of gastrodiploamacy. Moreover, many of these non-governmental actors have successfully participated directly in gastrodiploamatic efforts. These initiatives can be observed through business collaborations, online sales of culinary products, culinary content and reviews about Bandung, the establishment of Sundanese restaurants abroad that introduce authentic cuisine to diaspora communities, and various other efforts. Therefore, Bandung's culinary potential must be optimized to enhance gastrodiploamacy, as it reflects how the international community perceives

the city's image through its culinary products (Pujayanti, 2017).

Discussing Bandung's gastrodiploacy through packaged foods produced by the Bandung City MSMEs, will slightly mention environmental issues in it. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises or MSMEs, are one of the business groups that has a great opportunity to become a driver of gastrodiploacy. In accordance with the name, of course this MSME has the target market for the lower middle class. Because the economic skills of this community are not as mature as upper middle class, the purchasing power is limited. To fulfill her needs to choose products with fewer quantities and shop more often, meaning that the packaging that accumulates from this process will be much more than if you buy a product with a quantity that exceeds one packaging.

The use of plastic packaging for MSME products, which is considered more efficient for business development, in fact, poses more complex environmental challenges (Musdalifah, M., et al., 2023). The significant volume of waste presents an interrelated challenge with the initial phase of gastrodiploacy development. One way to address this issue is by encouraging MSMEs to contribute to environmental sustainability through the use of more eco-friendly packaging. While environmentally friendly packaging is relatively more expensive than conventional packaging that has long been in circulation, it is crucial to regulate its adoption to ensure environmental sustainability. Clear and firm political policies regarding product standardization must be established to ensure MSMEs' compliance with applicable regulations. If approached wisely, the packaging issue could actually present an economic opportunity. Imagine if the Bandung city government implemented strict policies requiring the use of eco-friendly packaging. Indonesian environmentally friendly packaging companies would have the potential to develop more rapidly. Moreover, Indonesia already has companies such as Ecoplease and Cocopack, which are based in Indonesia and specialize in sustainable packaging. Ecoplease, for instance, utilizes locally sourced raw materials such as bamboo and sugarcane bagasse for its products—adding value to materials that were previously considered waste. Given that Bandung has vast bamboo forests and an abundant supply of sugarcane bagasse from sugar mills in West Java, these resources could serve as viable raw materials. This initiative would not harm the environment, as bamboo is a fast-growing plant, and sugarcane bagasse has long been regarded as an unused byproduct of the sugar industry.

After addressing the challenges related to packaging, the discussion now shifts to the issue of culinary standardization. Culinary experts often face a dilemma in popularizing gastronomy. Culinary culture plays a significant role in shaping a society's identity; however, certain traditional foods that are considered delicious in their place of origin may not be well-received in other countries due to cultural and taste differences (Uyanik & Sahingoz, 2021). Flavor adjustments are sometimes necessary to suit the palate of foreign consumers. However, defining the extent to which these adjustments can be made without compromising the essence of Indonesia's signature spices remains challenging. The primary issue to avoid is ensuring that the process of taste adaptation does not distort the original flavor, thereby preventing the intended culinary message from being conveyed. Traditional dishes often carry their own stories and cultural backgrounds, which should not be lost in the process of adaptation. The goal is to maintain the authenticity of the dish while still considering the target country's preferences to facilitate acceptance. Many members of the Indonesian diaspora, particularly in the Netherlands, have established culinary businesses—both for economic purposes and out of nostalgia for the authenticity of Indonesian cuisine in their new country of residence. Therefore, the government should recognize the strategic role of the diaspora as frontline messengers of Indonesia's gastrodiploacy (Yayusman, M., Mulyasari, P., Trihartono, A., & G., 2023). Their culinary endeavors serve as a bridge to introduce and preserve the essence of Indonesian gastronomy in foreign markets, reinforcing its cultural and diplomatic significance.

Gastrodiploacy also faces challenges in the form of differences in currencies where they will hinder the payment process. For example, if you want to enter other country marketplaces, economic actors should register themselves for a certain bank that has been appointed so that the transaction can run. With this obstacle, there must be actors who read the situation and cooperate so that the obstacles of the currency can be overcome. The

cooperation that must be built and fertilizer is not small. But if successful, the fruit will encourage gastrodiplomacy Indonesia's development faster and more efficiently. To make this successful, of course, a human resource is needed. gastrodiplomacy actors must collect technology and understand the rules so that they are not wrong in making decisions. The workforce that Indonesia has is actually very sufficient to meet these needs, the opportunities for labor will have an impact on the welfare of the state.

The city of Bandung has also been observed to develop a gastrodiplomacy platform named Little Bandung which is seen by the author as an opportunity to facilitate MSMEs in expanding the network and promoting its products. We should be held by experts who are skilled at developing websites so as not to stagnate and accessible is more for the public. The team to socialize this platform also needs to be formed so that many people know and make the most of it. Market reach will be much wider with the help of technology. Apart from that, the bureaucracy in the form of managing documents and export conditions can also be abbreviated as the presence of digital platforms that facilitate this system. If the bureaucracy is more concise, more MSMEs will be involved and participate in the gastrodiplomacy program.

If everything mentioned above has been running, then there is a possibility of technological exchange from outside to then improve the quality of Indonesian food. For example, technology to extend consumption time (extend des) without using preservatives that can harm health, then packaging technology that makes Bandung snacks such as basreng and dry snacks that are easily crushed. Simple technologies that have been found and developed in other countries can be followed by MSMEs through interactions in the gastrodiplomacy process. Furthermore, for technology that requires expensive tools that can be managed by the government or service providers so that it is an economic opportunity through rentals or services that can be accessed by MSME. Thus the capital needed will not be as big as if buying your own tools, food security and packing will be much better.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The City of Bandung's gastrodiplomacy strategy, exemplified by the Little Bandung program, leverages digital transformation to promote its culinary heritage globally. Through platforms like the Little Bandung website and collaborations such as the sister-city partnership with Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, and participation in international events like MIHAS, Bandung has enhanced its culinary competitiveness and expanded market reach. However, challenges such as environmental concern, regulatory issues, tariff barriers, and product standardization persist. These challenges also present with opportunities, including economic potential in packaging innovation, technology services, and broader market access. To strengthen this strategy, optimizing digital platforms with multilingual e-commerce, integrating international payment systems like QRIS, and adopting eco-friendly packaging are essential. Additionally, careful flavor standardization, improved digital literacy, and streamlined export process through cross-sector collaboration can further enhance Bandung's gastrodiplomacy. By addressing these areas, Bandung can sustainably promote its culinary culture while maintaining authenticity and boosting economic growth.

RECOMMENDATION

Here are some recommendations to strengthen Bandung's gastrodiplomacy strategy through the *Little Bandung* program:

Digital Optimization and Global E-Commerce such as Develop a multilingual e-commerce platform to enhance accessibility for international markets, particularly in English, Mandarin, and Arabic. Integrate international payment systems such as QRIS Global, PayPal, and Alipay to facilitate cross-border transactions. Enhance digital marketing strategies, including social media campaigns, digital advertisements, and collaborations with global *food influencers* to increase exposure to Bandung's cuisine.

Strengthening International Collaboration and Culinary Diplomacy can be implemented through Expand sister-city partnerships with countries that have a high interest in Asian cuisine, such as Japan, South Korea, and European nations. Increase participation in global culinary exhibitions such as MIHAS (Malaysia), SIAL (France), and Gulfood (UAE). Foster collaborations with Indonesian restaurants abroad to improve accessibility and recognition of Bandung's culinary products in the global market.

Simplifying Regulations and Export Processes through Strengthen coordination between local governments, MSMEs, and the Ministry of Trade to streamline export procedures for culinary products. Develop an integrated export certification system to facilitate MSME access to international markets and also Provide digital literacy and export training for Bandung's MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness in the global market.

By implementing these strategies, Bandung can further establish itself as Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy hub, enhance the global competitiveness of its culinary products, and drive sustainable economic growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express our gratitude to Universitas Komputer Indonesia for providing continuous academic support and a conducive research environment that enabled the completion of this study. we are particularly grateful to our mentors and colleagues for their valuable insights and constructive feedback. We also extend our grateful to the unwavering support from our families and friends who have continuously motivated us throughout this research journey. their place, understanding, and encouragement have played a crucial role in helping us stay focused and dedicated. Finally, we recognize the contribution of all individuals, directly or indirectly, who have inspired and assisted us in completing this study. Without their collective support, this research would not have been possible.

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