

Digital Branding of Tourism Promotion: Gastrodiplomacy In The Digital Age

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Abstract

The digital landscape is transforming perspectives and approaches within the modern tourism industry. In previous eras, the approach to tourism was centered on exploiting natural beauty. Today, the focus has shifted towards the narrative of tourist experiences. Furthermore, the rising popularity of culinary tourism through social media and mass media channels has played a role in this paradigm shift. One country with popular culinary products is Thailand. This research will analyze how the phenomenon of culinary promotion in Thailand can be seen as a practice of gastrodiplomacy executed through a digital branding strategy. This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study strategy. Data was collected using an open-ended online questionnaire. Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for informants were undergraduate students aged 18-25 who are active users of various social media platforms. This study found that culinary-based tourism promotion strategies on digital platforms can persuade audiences. Culinary content on digital media not only fosters the intention to travel but also awakens gastronomic curiosity—the desire to experience cuisine firsthand in its place of origin. Two key elements of content quality were identified: the authenticity of personal storytelling and visual quality. Both elements play a role in the promotional effectiveness of culinary content. The anatomy of the most appealing advertisement for the audience is content that can present a complete experiential narrative, centers on the authenticity of street food, and values the process of creating culinary products as a cultural art form. These findings offer a strategic model for countries with similar potential, particularly Indonesia, to optimize gastronomy as a tool for tourism promotion on the global digital stage.

Keywords: Digital Branding, Culinary Tourism, Gastrodiplomacy, Nation Branding, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

Entering a new decade marked by digital disruption and post-pandemic shifts, the global tourism industry is continuously redefining its approaches. The modern tourism paradigm is no longer solely centered on visiting physical destinations but on creating and disseminating comprehensive experiential narratives. In this transformation, digital technology is no longer just an auxiliary tool but has become the core infrastructure that shapes perceptions, influences decisions, and mediates nearly every aspect of a tourist's journey.

Historically, tourism promotion was dominated by the exploitation of natural beauty—pristine beaches, majestic mountains, or lush forests. However, over-reliance on this narrative has created a 'sea of sameness,' where many destinations present similar and interchangeable visual imagery. Consequently, this strategy has begun to show signs of saturation and has become less effective in creating strong differentiation, as modern audiences seek more unique and personal narratives to distinguish one place from another (Lund et al., 2018).

Facing this challenge of saturation, gastronomy is now emerging as a strategic alternative that offers novelty and narrative depth. Far beyond its subsistence function, food is seen as a primary medium for experiencing the 'soul' of a destination. Modern tourists, especially from younger generations, increasingly seek authentic and profound travel experiences, where cuisine serves as a gateway to understanding the heritage, traditions, and social life of local communities (Croce & Perri, 2021). Authentic culinary experiences offer a strong emotional connection and unforgettable memories, making them a central element in the value proposition of many destinations aiming to stand out.

The synergy between gastronomy and digital media has given rise to a highly influential marketing phenomenon. Visually-oriented social media platforms like Instagram, and especially short-form video platforms like TikTok and YouTube Shorts, have become the main stages for culinary promotion. Content featuring food aesthetics, the cooking process, and dining experiences has proven highly effective in evoking emotional and cognitive responses from audiences (Liu et al., 2023). This phenomenon is amplified by the ecosystem of influencers and food vloggers who build trust through modern electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which often has a more significant impact than formal marketing communications.

To comprehensively dissect this multi-dimensional phenomenon, this research adopts a multi-layered theoretical framework. At the macro level, the phenomenon is analyzed through the lens of Nation Branding, which explains a country's strategic efforts to manage its reputation and competitive identity on the global stage (Dinnie & Sevin, 2020). At the tactical level, specific culinary promotion is understood as a practice of Gastrodiplomacy, a public diplomacy instrument that uses food to build soft power and a positive national image (Tamba et al., 2024). Finally, the execution of this strategy in the modern era will be analyzed using the concept of Digital Branding, which focuses on how digital platforms are utilized to build cohesive and interactive brand narratives (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Thailand presents a highly relevant case study for this research. The country is not only blessed with a rich and internationally recognized culinary heritage but is also observed to be actively and massively promoting its cuisine as a primary attraction across various digital platforms. This structured and sustained promotional phenomenon provides a rich context for applying the aforementioned theoretical framework.

The research's focus on students as subjects is well-justified. As part of Generation Z, students are digital natives who are the primary architects of cultural and consumer trends on online platforms (Baghel, 2023). Their information-seeking behavior is heavily influenced by digital content. Given their daily high-intensity interaction with social media, students in Thailand are highly exposed to culinary tourism promotion content. Their position at the intersection of local cultural identity and global digital trends makes understanding how they process this content—and how it shapes their perceptions and domestic travel intentions—key.

Although much research has discussed the role of digital media in tourism and the importance of gastronomy, a significant research gap exists at the specific intersection of the two. In-depth empirical research on how Thai students, as domestic consumers, interpret and are influenced by the digital representation of their own country's

cuisine is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of: how the phenomenon of culinary promotion in Thailand can be analyzed as a practice of Gastrodiplomacy executed through a Digital Branding strategy, and how this phenomenon, when examined through the Nation Branding framework, potentially influences the perceptions, attitudes, and travel interests among Thai students. Ultimately, a deep understanding from this Thai case study is expected to serve as a strategic reference model for other countries with similar potential, particularly Indonesia, in optimizing gastronomy as an instrument for tourism promotion on the global digital stage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nation Branding

In the competitive landscape of the 21st century, nations increasingly engage in strategic efforts to manage their reputation and identity on the international stage through Nation Branding. According to Dinnie and Sevin (2020), the nature of nation branding is continually evolving, with significant implications for the practice of public diplomacy. Historically, many tourism promotion strategies were dominated by the exploitation of natural beauty, such as pristine beaches or majestic mountains. However, an over-reliance on this narrative has led to a phenomenon described as a 'sea of sameness,' where many destinations present similar and interchangeable imagery (Lund et al., 2018). This saturation has rendered the strategy less effective, as modern audiences now seek more unique and personal narratives to distinguish one place from another. In response, storytelling has emerged as a crucial tool for creating a compelling and authentic destination brand identity, moving beyond simple visuals to build a deeper connection with potential visitors (Lund et al., 2018).

Gastrodiplomacy

As a specific instrument of public diplomacy, Gastrodiplomacy utilizes food and culinary arts to cultivate soft power and enhance a nation's image abroad. Rockower (2020) describes this practice as a guide to "winning hearts and minds" of the global public through the universal appeal of the dining table. This approach is particularly effective in the modern tourism paradigm, where food is seen as a primary medium for experiencing the 'soul' of a destination, far beyond its basic subsistence function (Croce & Perri, 2021). Younger generations of tourists, in particular, increasingly seek profound and authentic travel experiences, viewing cuisine as a gateway to understanding the heritage, traditions, and social life of local communities (Croce & Perri, 2021). These authentic culinary experiences create strong emotional connections and unforgettable memories (Stone et al., 2022), making gastronomy a central element in the value proposition for many destinations. As such, gastronomy plays a critical role in shaping a destination's brand identity (Suna & Alvarez, 2021). Studies have highlighted how nations like Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore actively use gastrodiplomacy to reinforce their national identity, confirming its strategic importance (Tamba et al., 2024).

Digital Branding

The execution of modern nation branding and gastrodiplomacy is inseparable from the principles of Digital Branding, which involves using digital platforms to build cohesive and interactive brand narratives (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Technology is no longer an auxiliary tool but the core infrastructure that shapes perceptions and influences decisions in tourism. Visually-oriented social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts have become the main stages for culinary promotion. Content featuring food aesthetics and dining experiences has proven highly effective in evoking emotional and cognitive responses from audiences, which can directly influence their intention to travel (Liu et al., 2023). This phenomenon is amplified by an ecosystem of influencers and food vloggers who build trust through modern electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which often has a more significant impact than formal marketing communications. For younger audiences like Generation Z, the authenticity of an influencer is a critical factor that shapes their consumer behavior and trust in a brand (Baghel, 2023). Ultimately, the promotional effectiveness of culinary content hinges on the ability to combine authentic storytelling with high visual quality to capture the attention of a discerning digital audience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach, focusing on the exploration and in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. A qualitative approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of understanding the meanings, experiences, and views of participants regarding an issue (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this context, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to richly explore how Thai students perceive cuisine as a tool for tourism promotion, an understanding that cannot be fully captured through numbers and statistics.

The research design used in this study is a case study. As a research design, a case study allows the researcher to deeply investigate a single phenomenon. This phenomenon can be an individual, event, activity, or program (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design is considered most appropriate as the research focuses intensively on "a bounded case," namely "the perceptions of a group of Thai students with specific characteristics." This research is grounded in the social constructivism paradigm, which posits that individuals actively construct personal meanings of the realities they experience. This construction of meaning is the result of a dynamic interaction between individuals and their peers, as well as with the surrounding social and cultural contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Participants and Data Collection Procedures

This study involved five participants selected using the purposive sampling method. This selection was based on specific criteria to ensure that the collected data was most relevant to the research objectives. The specific criteria set for participants were: active undergraduate students in Thailand, aged between 18-25, and active social media users with a usage duration of more than five hours per day. The last criterion was considered important because exposure to modern tourism promotion is closely linked to the intensity of social media use.

The data collection procedure is planned to be carried out in June 2025. The primary data collection method will be an open-ended questionnaire distributed online via a digital platform. This method was chosen to provide flexibility and convenience for participants to answer questions reflectively and in-depth at their own pace. The questionnaire contains a series of essay questions designed to explore the participants' views, experiences, and perceptions regarding culinary-based tourism promotion.

Data Validity

To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the data in this qualitative study, the researcher applied validation strategies appropriate for textual data from a single method. First, the researcher used source triangulation. As explained in the principles of qualitative validation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), this technique involves comparing data obtained from the five different participants to identify consistency, patterns, and convergent themes. Second, the researcher will ensure a rich, thick description in the presentation of the results. This is achieved by presenting data in detail and using extensive direct quotes from participants' questionnaire answers to ensure that the researcher's interpretations remain firmly rooted in the original data and can be verified by the reader.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of seeking information by organizing data obtained from various sources. It involves describing all matters related to the data, categorizing them, and then selecting important information to draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018). The data analysis in this study includes two main stages: encoding and decoding. The encoding stage begins with content analysis to identify dominant codes and meanings in the media texts. Subsequently, the decoding stage focuses on the audience, which starts with transcribing interviews, creating categories of findings, and analyzing them by considering the informants' socio-cultural backgrounds. These categories are then mapped to group the audience into three typological reception positions: dominant reading, negotiated reading, or oppositional reading. The analysis process concludes with the drawing of conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research objectively presents findings obtained through an open-ended questionnaire, analyzed thematically. The main findings indicate that the use of culinary content in tourism advertisements on digital media is generally considered appealing and effective by the informants. However, the findings also emphasize that the effectiveness of such promotions is highly dependent on two crucial factors: the selection of the right social media platform to

reach the audience, and the ability to present content that showcases the authenticity and uniqueness of local cuisine, not just a commercial image.

To ensure data quality, this study implemented several methodological strategies. The validity of the findings was maintained through purposive sampling, where five informants were selected based on strict criteria (undergraduate students, aged 18-25, social media users > 5 hours per day) to ensure the perspectives gathered were highly relevant to the digital phenomenon under investigation. The extensive use of direct quotes from questionnaire answers in the presentation of results also aimed to maintain authenticity and ensure that the researcher's interpretations remained firmly rooted in the original data. The trustworthiness of the data was also strengthened by the source triangulation method, which involved comparing answers from the five different informants to identify consistency, patterns, and convergent themes, ensuring that the findings were not random or biased by a single individual.

Informant Characteristics

This study involved five informants selected based on established criteria through purposive sampling. All informants are active undergraduate students in Thailand, with an age range of 18-25. They are all heavy social media users with a daily usage of more than five hours, making them a highly relevant group for studying tourism promotion phenomena in the digital era. Despite their demographic similarities and intensity of social media use, each informant presented a unique profile regarding their history, platforms, and purpose of use.

- Informant C: A student from Phitsanulok who started using social media between the ages of 10-14. He uses various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X for diverse purposes, including entertainment, information seeking, communication, and shopping.
- Informant BH: A student from Phitsanulok who began using social media between the ages of 10-14. She is active on Instagram, TikTok, and X, which she utilizes for entertainment, seeking information/news, and shopping.
- Informant CK: A student from Phrae. She became active on social media between the ages of 10-14 and uses YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for entertainment, information, communication, and shopping.
- Informant PJ: A student from Phitsanulok who has been using social media since an early age, under 10 years old. She is active on various platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X for entertainment, information, communication, and shopping.
- Informant TD: A student from Phitsanulok who started using social media between the ages of 15-19. The platforms she frequently uses are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for various purposes such as entertainment, information, communication, and shopping.

Paradigm Shift in Tourism Promotion in the Digital Era: Cuisine as a Primary Attraction

The results of this study indicate a significant paradigm shift in global tourism advertising strategies. It was found that many countries no longer rely solely on promoting natural beauty as the only magnet to attract tourists. Instead, cuisine has emerged as a primary alternative attraction whose popularity continues to rise and has effectively become the new face of a country's tourism.

This shift has been massively driven by the rapid development of technology, primarily digital media. The presence of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube has transformed the advertising landscape, allowing tourism promotion to be more dynamic, personal, and easily accessible to a global audience. Visually appealing and appetizing culinary content has proven to be very effective in this digital ecosystem, thus becoming a strategic promotional tool.

This macro phenomenon is clearly reflected and confirmed in the findings obtained from in-depth interviews with the research informants. Based on the interview results, all five informants uniformly stated that they had been exposed to tourism advertisements on digital media that specifically highlighted cuisine as the main attraction. Furthermore, this exposure was not limited to a single platform. Instead, the informants reported encountering similar promotional content on the various social media channels they use daily. This indicates that the distribution of culinary-based tourism advertising has widely and effectively permeated the digital media ecosystem consumed by the audience.

Furthermore, an analysis of the content encountered by the informants shows a strategic diversity. This diversity can be mapped along two main dimensions: the type of dish and the country of origin. First, in terms of dish types, the spectrum is very broad, ranging from authentic local and traditional cuisine to fine dining served in starred restaurants. The existence of these two poles indicates a sophisticated marketing strategy, where tourism destinations do not target only one type of tourist. The promotion of street food or traditional meals targets adventurers, backpackers, and tourists seeking pure and authentic cultural experiences. On the other hand, the promotion of dishes in luxury restaurants targets the premium market segment, food connoisseurs, and those seeking luxury and exclusivity.

Second, in terms of country of origin, the findings confirm that culinary promotion is a global competitive arena. The audience's exposure is not limited to cuisine from one or two dominant countries. This is evidenced by the varied accounts of the informants:

Informant TD provided the clearest picture of this global landscape. She reported having seen tourism ads featuring noodles, pasta, and Japanese cuisine. This shows that in her social media timeline, destinations from East Asia to Europe are competing for her attention through their respective culinary icons. Informant PT specifically mentioned exposure to ads that made Korean cuisine the face of its tourism, a reflection of the power of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) phenomenon, which has successfully made food an inseparable part of its cultural appeal (Kustiawan et al., 2023). Meanwhile, informant BH clearly remembered how traditional Thai food was the main feature in the ads she encountered, proving the success of Thailand, which has long positioned its cuisine as a tourism ambassador.

The diversity of these findings strengthens the argument that cuisine, especially signature dishes, has effectively become a primary alternative in contemporary tourism promotion strategies. More than that, cuisine has become a universal language used by various countries to tell their stories, build a unique destination brand identity, and ultimately, convince audiences to come and experience firsthand what is being offered.

Persuasive Impact and Behavioral Driver: Arousing Travel Interest and Gastronomic Curiosity

The use of cuisine as the spearhead of tourism promotion has proven to be not just a branding strategy, but an approach that delivers an effective and measurable persuasive impact on audience behavior. Research findings show that this strategy successfully cuts through the digital information noise and directly influences the audience's intention and desire to travel.

This effectiveness is supported by direct acknowledgments from the informants. Informant CK, for example, firmly stated that exposure to culinary-based tourism ads had successfully sparked his interest in traveling to the promoted destinations. According to him, the appetizing visualization of cuisine provides a more concrete and relatable picture of an experience compared to natural landscapes alone.

A similar statement came from Informant TD. As previously mentioned, she was exposed to ads featuring Japanese food, pasta, and various types of noodles, and she affirmed that such content actively triggered her desire to travel. These ads did not just pass by; they left an emotional imprint that translated into a real travel aspiration.

Beyond merely arousing the intention to visit, these ads also achieved a deeper level of persuasion: awakening gastronomic curiosity. The informants explained that the ads not only made them want to see the place but also created a strong desire to try the food firsthand at its original location. The ads successfully transformed culinary products from mere visual objects into a must-try experiential agenda for potential tourists. This curiosity becomes a strong additional motivation, changing the question from "Should I go?" to "I have to go to taste that."

Thus, the effectiveness of this strategy lies in its ability to operate on two levels. On the first level, it successfully sparks the imagination about a destination in general. On the second, more powerful level, it implants a specific mission or goal (tasting the cuisine) that becomes a concrete driver for the realization of a trip.

Perceptions of Ad Attractiveness: Quality of Execution as a Key Factor

The effectiveness of an advertisement depends not only on its subject matter but is also heavily determined by the quality of its execution and its ability to capture the audience's attention aesthetically. A strong message requires appealing packaging to be conveyed effectively. In this context, the research findings show a generally very positive response to the quality of the culinary tourism ads encountered.

Interview results revealed that four out of five informants explicitly stated that the culinary tourism ads they saw were appealing. They described these ads as well-packaged content with eye-pleasing cinematography, successfully using visual and audio elements to create an immersive and appetizing atmosphere. This appeal is the initial gateway

for the audience to open up to the persuasive message being delivered, which ultimately fosters an interest in traveling.

However, it is important to note the presence of one dissenting voice that adds a crucial nuance to these findings. One informant stated that the ad he saw was not sufficiently interesting to him. This finding serves as a critical reminder that the success of a culinary promotion strategy is not automatic. The mere presence of delicious food content does not guarantee that an ad will succeed in captivating the audience.

This case underscores the critical importance of creative execution factors. Aspects such as production quality, storytelling, appropriate music selection, and authenticity of presentation play a vital role. A failure in any of these aspects can cause an ad to feel flat, generic, or unmemorable, causing its primary message to fail to be delivered effectively, even if the culinary subject itself has great potential.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of culinary tourism ads circulating on digital media have successfully met the aesthetic quality standards expected by the audience, which is one of the pillars of their persuasive success. However, the presence of negative perceptions from a small segment of the audience confirms that investment in production quality and originality of ideas is an absolute requirement for culinary promotion strategies to reach their maximum potential in winning the competition in a crowded media landscape.

Delving deeper into the factors that make culinary tourism content appealing, this research found an interesting dualism in audience preference: the search for authenticity and the demand for visual quality. The primary foundation of appealing content, according to the informants, is good storytelling. However, the source and style of that storytelling play a crucial role. There is a strong tendency among informants to find content produced by independent content creators or food vloggers more appealing and authentic. Content from these vloggers is perceived as having a higher level of honesty and relatability compared to highly professional and overtly commercial content produced by official agencies or tourism boards. A vlogger's personal storytelling style, often unscripted and colored by spontaneous reactions, successfully creates a sense of closeness and trust. The audience feels like they are getting a recommendation from a friend, not being "sold" a tour package.

Nevertheless, this preference for authenticity comes with an absolute, non-negotiable condition: the visual quality of the content must remain high. The informants consistently emphasized that no matter how authentic a review or story is, if it is presented with poor image quality—such as low resolution, dark lighting, or shaky camera work—their interest would immediately plummet. Visual aesthetics remain the primary gateway to attracting and retaining their attention.

This reveals a complex creative challenge for tourism marketers in the digital age. The audience desires content that feels "real" and "honest," like a vlogger's creation, but at the same time, they expect eye-pleasing visual quality on par with professional production standards. Thus, it can be concluded that the most effective ideal intersection for capturing audience interest lies in content that can balance these two elements: the authenticity of a personal and trustworthy storytelling style, combined with the technical and aesthetic excellence of a high-quality production.

The Anatomy of an Appealing Advertisement: Experiential Narrative, Street Food Authenticity, and the Art of Creation

When the informants were asked to describe more specifically what kind of content they found most appealing, their preferences largely converged on advertisements centered on the theme of experience and featuring authentic foods, especially street food, from each country.

For them, the most successful ads were those that managed to go beyond a mere presentation of food as a static product and, instead, were able to capture and sell a complete experience. Informant PT articulated this very clearly. According to her, ads that feature street food along with the bustling atmosphere around it—the sound of people passing by, the interaction between sellers and buyers—are far more interesting. Such an ad, for her, is an invitation to "truly feel the atmosphere" and have an authentic experience that is not overly fabricated.

This view was reinforced by informant TD, who also stated that content showing other people's experiences in enjoying the cuisine was very appealing to her. Seeing expressions of satisfaction, togetherness, and social interaction happening around the food becomes a very powerful psychological driver to want to try it directly at its place of origin.

Besides the experience of consumption, another interesting dimension that emerged was the fascination with the process behind the creation of the dish itself. Informant CK saw the food-making process as a window into understanding the local culture. For him, watching how a dish is cooked and served, often passed down through generations, is an art form. The uniqueness of each preparation method is a distinct attraction that he finds very interesting to watch and learn about.

Informant C agreed on the importance of showing the creation process but added an aesthetic layer as a crucial factor. For him, a process and final result that look neat, clean, and premium have a higher appeal. This indicates that while authenticity is valued, a classy and visually pleasing presentation remains an important factor that can enhance the value and allure of culinary content, especially for certain audience segments.

Thus, the anatomy of the most effective culinary tourism advertisement, according to the audience, is a complex narrative tapestry. The ad must be able to capture the essence of an authentic experience, often found in the vibrant life of street food, while at the same time honoring the art and culture behind its creation process. All of this must be wrapped in a high-quality visual presentation, capable of capturing both honest realism and premium beauty.

This research confirms a fundamental paradigm shift in global tourism promotion strategies in the digital era, where cuisine has transformed from a complementary element into a primary attraction. Driven by the rapid development of social media, this promotional strategy has proven to have permeated widely and effectively, with all research informants having been exposed to culinary-based tourism ads from various countries and platforms.

The main findings show that this strategy has a significant persuasive impact. Culinary ads not only succeed in fostering the intention to travel but are also able to awaken a deeper "gastronomic curiosity"—a strong desire to experience the cuisine firsthand at its original location. This effectiveness is highly dependent on the quality of the ad's execution. The majority of the audience finds the circulating ads appealing, but the success of an ad is heavily determined by its ability to balance two crucial elements: authenticity and visual quality.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it can be concluded that the most effective culinary tourism promotion strategy in the digital era is not one that merely displays beautiful images of food, but one that presents a complete experiential narrative. The anatomy of an advertisement that is most appealing to the modern audience is one that:

- Centers on experience and authenticity: showcasing cuisine in its actual context, such as the bustling atmosphere of street food or the social interactions while enjoying a meal.
- Values the process as Art and Culture: presenting the food-making process as a window to understanding the local culture.
- Has a trustworthy storytelling style: often found in the content of independent creators (food vloggers) who are perceived as more honest and personal.
- Is Presented with High Visual Quality: maintaining an aesthetic standard that is pleasing to the eye, capturing both honest realism and premium beauty.

The implication is that modern tourism marketers are required to evolve from mere advertisers into cultural storytellers. Investment is not enough in promotion alone, but also in the production of high-quality content that feels authentic and can build an emotional connection with the audience. Collaboration with credible content creators becomes a key strategy to bridge the audience's need for authenticity and quality.

Specifically, the findings of this research are highly relevant for Indonesia. With its rich biodiversity and cultural diversity from Sabang to Merauke, Indonesia possesses extraordinary culinary capital to be a primary tourist attraction. The narratives of authentic experiences and street food, which are highly sought after by global audiences, can easily be found in the culture of warung, angkringan, and street vendors that are the lifeblood of social life in various regions. Similarly, the depth of philosophy and the uniqueness of the process behind each traditional dish align with the finding that the culinary creation process is a strong cultural attraction. Global recognition of dishes like Rendang and Nasi Goreng validates this potential. The government's efforts through strategic programs like "Indonesia Spice Up the World" also show an awareness of the importance of gastrodiplomacy and culinary tourism

(Kemenparekraf, 2021). Therefore, by applying a digital storytelling strategy focused on experiential authenticity and visual quality as revealed in this research, Indonesia has a great opportunity to strengthen its image as a world-class culinary tourism destination.

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