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THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE CULINARY: FROM LOCAL INGREDIENTS TO THE TRAVELER'S TABLE

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates how local ingredients can underpin the development of sustainable culinary practices in Yogyakarta and their influence on tourism and the local economy. Utilizing a qualitative approach based on the Miles and Huberman framework, the research focuses on local culinary entrepreneurs, farmers, tourists, and other stakeholders in Yogyakarta. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling and included 15 restaurant owners specializing in local ingredients, 10 farmers from the regions of Bantul, Sleman, and Gunungkidul, as well as 20 domestic and international tourists. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The results indicate that using local ingredients in traditional dishes like

gudeg and thiwul not only helps preserve cultural heritage but also boosts restaurant revenue by as much as 25% and creates new employment opportunities for farmers. Both domestic and international tourists expressed a strong preference for authentic, locally-sourced dishes due to the cultural experience they provide. Nevertheless, challenges such as inconsistent availability of local ingredients, inadequate logistics, and low consumer awareness of sustainability impede progress. The study concludes that effective collaboration among government entities, businesses, and communities is vital to addressing these challenges and enhancing Yogyakarta's status as a sustainable culinary tourism destination. Consequently, the findings offer valuable insights for developing sustainable culinary systems in other regions.

Keyword: Culinary Tourism; Local Ingredients; Sustainable Culinary

INTRODUCTION

Over the last thirty years, from the 1990s to the 2020s, sustainability has become a critical global concern, leading various sectors to adopt more environmentally and socially responsible practices (Ryvak, 2022). The food industry, closely tied to the use of natural resources, is essential in advancing sustainability objectives (Khudyakova, 2023). Previous research indicates that culinary practices can help reduce food waste through education focused on



sustainability (Yildirim et al., 2024) and by using kitchen appliances designed for eco-friendly cooking (Scherer & Santos, 2023). Therefore, embedding sustainability into the culinary field is not only an environmental imperative but also a key approach to encouraging changes in global consumer behavior.

Acknowledging the significance of sustainability in the food industry, Indonesia, known for its biodiversity and cultural heritage, is well-positioned to lead in sustainable culinary innovations (Bastas, 2021). Additionally, global examples show that sustainable culinary initiatives like European festivals focusing on local ingredients (Csapody et al., 2021) and Himalayan cuisine utilizing organic local products for cultural preservation (Sharma, 2024) can add value to tourism destinations. Thus, Indonesia has the opportunity to leverage its vibrant local traditions to develop a sustainability model that not only benefits the local economy but also enhances its standing in the global culinary tourism arena.

Utilizing local ingredients in cooking has two main benefits: it promotes environmental sustainability by lowering carbon footprints and bolsters the local economy (Castro et al., 2023). Additionally, past studies indicate that using local ingredients, as demonstrated in the culinary traditions of Japan and Austria with geographical indications, aids in maintaining traditional production techniques while increasing the market value of local goods (Gugerell et al., 2017). Therefore, embracing local ingredients in Indonesia not only helps safeguard cultural heritage but also fosters the development of a robust and competitive food system to fulfill global market needs.

Despite efforts to promote sustainable culinary practices, there are several considerable obstacles. One major issue is the limited awareness of the strategic importance of local ingredients among both the public and those within the industry (Jamwal et al., 2021). Similar difficulties have been noted in Europe and Turkey, where culinary festivals and traditional customs face challenges in remaining culturally relevant and attractive in contemporary markets (Csapody et al., 2022; Çakır & Bekar, 2024). Consequently, it is essential for Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta, to confront these challenges by enhancing awareness through educational initiatives and encouraging the use of local ingredients.

This study seeks to investigate how local ingredients can form the basis of sustainable culinary development in Yogyakarta and their effects on attracting tourists and benefiting the local economy. The research concentrates on the value chain from production to consumption, analyzing its impact on cultural preservation and environmental management (Lukin et al., 2022). Prior research on culinary education has highlighted the need for curriculum reforms to support sustainable development objectives (Kaura et al., 2022) and the implementation of innovative approaches in the establishment of community-based culinary destinations (Mahmudi, 2023). Consequently, this research could provide strategic guidance for Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta, in developing a sustainable culinary system that enhances its reputation as a global culinary tourism hub.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Culinary Tourism

Sustainable culinary tourism emphasizes responsible food consumption, local ingredient utilization, and environmental conservation while promoting cultural heritage and supporting local communities. In the context of eco-friendly tourism development, sustainable culinary practices play a vital role in reducing environmental impacts and ensuring long-term benefits for both tourists and residents. As the demand for authentic and ethical food experiences grows, integrating sustainability into culinary tourism becomes an essential strategy for enhancing a destination's appeal.

A key aspect of sustainable culinary tourism is the use of locally sourced ingredients, which minimizes the carbon footprint associated with food transportation while supporting local farmers and producers. Research highlights that sourcing ingredients from local farms and markets enhances authenticity while promoting sustainable agricultural practices (Alonso et al., 2018). This approach not only helps reduce dependence on imported goods but also strengthens regional food systems, ensuring that communities benefit economically from tourism activities. Many destinations worldwide are adopting farm-to-table dining concepts, where chefs collaborate directly with farmers to create fresh, seasonal, and sustainable menus. These initiatives contribute to local economic development and enhance the gastronomic identity of a region, making it a key attraction for food-conscious travelers.

Another critical element of sustainable culinary tourism is minimizing food waste. In many popular tourist destinations, food waste remains a significant issue due to overproduction and inefficient supply chain management. Sustainable culinary tourism encourages the adoption of zero-waste policies, such as composting organic waste, repurposing leftover ingredients, and implementing portion control strategies. Restaurants and culinary establishments that promote waste reduction strategies not only enhance their environmental credentials but also attract eco-conscious tourists who prefer responsible dining experiences. Research indicates that waste reduction in the food sector contributes to the overall sustainability of tourism by lowering greenhouse gas emissions and reducing resource consumption (Wijanarti & Purusottama, 2022).

Additionally, sustainable culinary tourism focuses on preserving and celebrating local culinary traditions. Many tourists seek authentic, culturally immersive experiences, and food plays a central role in shaping their perceptions of a destination. By highlighting traditional cooking techniques, indigenous recipes, and heritage food practices, destinations can offer meaningful culinary experiences while safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Culinary tourism initiatives, such as community-led food workshops, storytelling sessions, and heritage dining experiences, allow travelers to engage with local traditions while contributing to cultural preservation. Research suggests that the atmosphere, overall experience, and food quality are crucial factors in attracting both local and international visitors (Wijanarti & Purusottama, 2022). Destinations that successfully integrate cultural storytelling with sustainable gastronomy create a compelling narrative that enhances their global appeal.

Beyond environmental and cultural considerations, social sustainability is also a crucial factor in culinary tourism. Fair trade practices, ethical sourcing, and equitable employment opportunities in the food and hospitality sectors ensure that tourism benefits are equitably distributed across communities. Encouraging local entrepreneurship through culinary tourism initiatives enables small businesses, family-owned restaurants, and artisanal food producers to thrive. Destinations that support inclusive tourism policies that empower marginalized communities, such as rural farmers and indigenous groups, enhance the social sustainability of their tourism sectors.

In conclusion, sustainable culinary tourism serves as a powerful tool for promoting environmental responsibility, cultural heritage preservation, and local economic development. By prioritizing local ingredients, waste reduction, and community engagement, destinations can create authentic and responsible food tourism experiences that appeal to modern travelers. As the global tourism industry increasingly shifts towards sustainability, integrating ethical and eco-friendly culinary practices is not just a trend but a necessity for ensuring the long-term viability of food tourism.

Contribution of Culinary Tourism to the Local Economy

Culinary tourism serves as a crucial mechanism for preserving cultural sustainability and stimulating local economies by promoting regional products, supporting small-scale producers, and creating employment opportunities. As global travelers increasingly seek authentic and immersive food experiences, destinations that integrate local culinary traditions into their tourism strategies gain a competitive advantage. Research highlights that culinary tourism not only enhances the visitor experience but also strengthens the socio-economic fabric of host communities by generating income, empowering small farmers, and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices (Bain, 2024).

One of the primary benefits of culinary tourism is its ability to drive demand for regional products, thereby fostering the growth of local food industries. When tourists consume locally sourced dishes, they indirectly contribute to the sustainability of small farms, artisanal food producers, and traditional food businesses. Studies in South Africa illustrate that culinary tourism can significantly enhance local incomes by increasing demand for fresh produce, dairy, meat, and traditional ingredients (Bain, 2024). This, in turn, incentivizes farmers to adopt sustainable farming techniques that not only meet tourism-driven demand but also preserve biodiversity and maintain ecological balance. By integrating farm-to-table concepts into culinary tourism, destinations can create resilient local food systems that reduce reliance on imported goods while enhancing food security.

Beyond its economic benefits, culinary tourism is also a powerful tool for cultural preservation. Many traditional food practices face the threat of extinction due to globalization and the dominance of mass-produced food. By showcasing heritage cuisines, indigenous cooking methods, and regional flavors, culinary tourism ensures that local food identities remain intact. Storytelling, cooking demonstrations, and interactive food experiences provide travelers with a deeper appreciation of a destination's cultural heritage, making them more likely to engage with and respect local traditions. Additionally, culinary tourism initiatives empower

local artisans and chefs, allowing them to take pride in their craft while introducing global audiences to their culinary heritage.

For culinary tourism to be effective, it must be accompanied by strong marketing strategies that highlight the uniqueness of local gastronomy. Research suggests that marketing campaigns rooted in traditional culinary narratives enhance the competitiveness of tourist destinations (du Rand & Heath, 2006). Destinations that successfully brand themselves as culinary hotspots through storytelling, digital marketing, and gastronomic festivals attract both food enthusiasts and mainstream travelers. Social media platforms, in particular, play a significant role in amplifying local food experiences, as travelers frequently share their culinary discoveries online. Well-crafted marketing strategies that emphasize authenticity, sustainability, and exclusivity can position a destination as a must-visit for culinary tourists.

In conclusion, culinary tourism is an essential pillar of cultural sustainability and economic resilience. By driving demand for regional products, supporting local farmers, and creating employment opportunities, it stimulates economic growth while preserving gastronomic heritage. Additionally, strategic marketing efforts that celebrate traditional cuisines can elevate a destination's appeal and ensure long-term tourism success. As the global tourism industry continues to evolve, investing in culinary tourism not only benefits local communities but also enriches travelers' experiences, making food a central element of sustainable tourism development.

The Importance of Authenticity and Local Culture

Authenticity plays an essential role in delivering high-quality and enjoyable culinary experiences for visitors. A study in Shunde County, China, indicates that the genuine nature of local cuisine not only improves perceived quality but also builds tourists' loyalty to specific culinary locations (Zhang et al., 2019). This is reinforced by the experience economy perspective and the intimacy model, which show that tourists' engagement in the production of local food can enhance their understanding and appreciation of the local culture (Sidali et al., 2015).

Strategic Framework and Supporting Theories

The Resource Based Theory and Value Chain Theory offer key theoretical foundations for advancing sustainable culinary tourism. These approaches focus on using local ingredients, promoting sustainability education, and engaging in destination marketing centered around culinary experiences (Horng & Tsai, 2012). Furthermore, the Social Exchange Theory and Multiplier Effect can help illustrate how enhancing culinary tourism fosters sustainable social and economic growth (Wondirad et al., 2021).

Collaboration and Sustainability in Local Culinary Practices

Numerous studies have underscored the significance of cooperation among governments, businesses, and local communities in cultivating a sustainable culinary ecosystem. Research indicates that incorporating local culinary traditions into destination marketing can benefit communities and boost their attractiveness to global tourists (Mak et al., 2012). Additionally, establishing networks for small

producers has been shown to effectively increase tourists' understanding of social, cultural, and environmental sustainability (Backe, 2020).

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative case study approach to investigate the relationships among the use of local ingredients, culinary practices, and tourist attractions. The focus will be on local communities, restaurants utilizing these ingredients, and culinary tourism managers in Indonesia. Participants will be selected through purposive sampling, based on specific criteria linked to the study's goals. These criteria outline four key groups: first, local restaurants or food stalls in popular tourist destinations like Malioboro, Keraton, and Taman Sari that use at least 70% local ingredients and primarily cater to tourists; second, producers of local ingredients from the Yogyakarta area—including Sleman, Bantul, and Gunungkidul—who create traditional foods such as gudeg, tempeh, and coconut products; third, tourists who have dined at a minimum of two local ingredient-focused restaurants in Yogyakarta; and fourth, government stakeholders like representatives from the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Office, who endorse sustainable culinary initiatives. The study will target culinary tourism hotspots in Yogyakarta, such as Malioboro, known for its traditional restaurants; Keraton Yogyakarta, famous for dishes like manuk enom and brongkos; Gunungkidul, recognized for offerings like sayur ndeso and thiwul; Bantul, celebrated for coconut-based dishes like tholpit and geplak; and the Kaliurang area in Sleman, noted for unique items such as jadah tempe and gudeg made with locally sourced ingredients. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Ensuring data validity will involve triangulation techniques to cross-verify findings from various sources (interviews, observations, documents). Data analysis will follow the methodology outlined by Miles and Huberman (2014), incorporating data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

This research provides detailed insights into the use of local ingredients in sustainable cooking practices in Yogyakarta. The primary findings are as follows:

Utilization of Local Ingredients

Restaurants and eateries in the Malioboro and Keraton areas have reported that approximately 80% of their menu ingredients are sourced locally. For example, gudeg features young jackfruit from Bantul farmers, and tempeh is an essential element in many traditional meals. In Gunungkidul, signature dishes such as thiwul and sayur ndeso showcase locally cultivated cassava and other regional produce. Many restaurants actively support local farmers by establishing direct contracts, bypassing middlemen. They typically obtain specific items like free-range chicken, gurameh fish, and fresh vegetables—including lettuce, spinach, and long beans—directly from these suppliers. Local farmers in Sleman provide fresh vegetables daily, while processed products like coconut or palm sugar come from Bantul. Nevertheless, some restaurants have indicated that they occasionally depend on

ingredients from outside Yogyakarta, particularly during off-seasons when local supplies are insufficient.

Tourist Attraction

Domestic tourists perceive food made from local ingredients as a symbol of authentic culture. Below are insights from interviews with tourists:

Respondent 1 (Female, 28 years old, Jakarta): "I love dishes like gudeg and brongkos. They have unique flavors that are hard to find elsewhere. These meals also embody a rich cultural significance."

Respondent 2 (Male, 35 years old, Surabaya): "Bakpia is a must-have souvenir whenever I visit Yogyakarta. I prefer dining at places that utilize local ingredients because the flavors seem more genuine."

Respondent 3 (Female, 41 years old, Bandung): "The food in Yogyakarta is packed with flavor. I'm very pleased with both the taste and the reasonable prices."

The data suggests that traditional dishes like bakpia, brongkos, and gudeg are major culinary highlights. On average, tourists interviewed indicated a high level of satisfaction with the flavors of local cuisine. International visitors, especially Europeans, tend to favor dishes prepared with local ingredients, particularly when these dishes are showcased in an environmentally friendly manner. Culinary festivals in Yogyakarta offer an immersive experience, especially when tourists have the opportunity to engage with the food-making process, like learning to prepare gudeg. Some feedback from international tourists includes:

Respondent 1 (Male, 28 years old, Germany): "I loved the regional cuisine, particularly the meals made with organic ingredients. Learning to prepare gudeg at the culinary festival was a remarkable experience."

Respondent 2 (Female, 27 years old, France): "Culinary festivals in Yogyakarta are captivating. It's enjoyable to observe traditional cooking methods and even take part in them."

Respondent 3 (Male, 28 years old, Netherlands): "I value the link between local cuisine and sustainability. Dishes like gudeg and their preparation methods reflect a respect for both the environment and local traditions."

Local tourists perceive dishes crafted from regional ingredients as a testament to Yogyakarta's genuine culture, often expressing great contentment with the tastes and culinary experiences. In contrast, international tourists tend to emphasize the environmental elements and cultural exchanges they encounter during culinary festivals and traditional cooking activities. Observations reveal that authenticity, the quality of local ingredients, and cultural experiences are the key factors drawing tourists to Yogyakarta's cuisine. Traditional practices, like presenting food on banana leaves, create a memorable impact on visitors.

Economic Impact

Restaurants that use local ingredients have seen their revenues increase by up to 25% in the past three years, driven by a heightened demand from tourists for traditional dishes. In addition, local farmers in Sleman, Bantul, and Gunungkidul have experienced a 15% increase in the prices of their goods, thanks to interest from these restaurants. Direct contracts with restaurants have also provided these

farmers with more stable incomes. Consequently, the culinary industry focused on local ingredients has generated new job opportunities in agriculture, food processing, and restaurant services. Statistics show that 40% of employees in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector are from local communities, further enhancing the economic advantages of sustainable culinary practices.

Challenges in Implementation

The reliance on planting seasons creates inconsistent availability of local ingredients. For example, the supply of young jackfruit diminishes in the dry season, which impacts gudeg production. Moreover, insufficient infrastructure hampers the transportation of ingredients to local markets. The limited logistics systems drive up operational costs for restaurants that depend on local produce. Additionally, tourists' lack of awareness about sustainability can lead them to choose fast food instead of locally sourced dishes made with natural ingredients. These issues highlight the necessity for strategic solutions to stabilize supply chains, enhance infrastructure, and promote the significance of sustainable culinary practices.

Discussion

This finding reinforces prior research indicating that the use of local ingredients can support culinary sustainability. As noted by Sidali et al. (2015), local ingredients not only enhance cultural identity but also help to reduce the carbon footprint of the supply chain. In Yogyakarta, the strong relationship between farmers and restaurants is essential for ensuring a sustainable supply of local products. However, technological interventions are needed to address seasonal challenges and maintain ingredient quality. The study also reveals that both domestic and international tourists have a strong preference for cuisine rooted in local culture, supporting the findings of Zhang et al. (2019), which emphasize that authenticity is a key element in enriching the tourist experience. In Yogyakarta, the robust cultural elements, such as the presentation of food following Javanese traditions, provide a unique value that should be continually promoted.

The positive impact of local cuisine on the economy reflects Bain's (2024) findings, which emphasize the significance of culinary tourism in creating jobs and supporting farmers. Nevertheless, the fluctuation in local ingredient prices in Yogyakarta poses a challenge that needs to be addressed through price stabilization systems and more efficient supply chain development. A lack of supportive infrastructure and consumer education are significant barriers. Solutions such as improving logistical access and expanding educational campaigns can help raise public awareness about the importance of sustainability, as suggested by Wondirad et al. (2021). Therefore, this research indicates that local ingredient-based cuisine in Yogyakarta has great potential to support cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. However, successful implementation requires collaboration among the government, business actors, and the local community. By tackling logistical challenges, consumer education, and price stability, Yogyakarta can reinforce its position as a world-class sustainable culinary destination.

CONCLUSIONS

This research indicates that the use of local ingredients in sustainable cuisine in Yogyakarta has significant potential to support cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. From the cultural sustainability perspective, utilizing local ingredients such as young jackfruit, cassava, and coconut in traditional dishes like gudeg and thiwul not only preserves culinary traditions but also reinforces Yogyakarta's cultural identity. Local cuisine serves as an effective medium for introducing cultural values to both domestic and international tourists, making it a crucial element in cultural diplomacy. Tourists exhibit a strong interest in dishes based on local ingredients, as they offer authenticity and unique cultural experiences; aspects such as traditional presentation, ingredient quality, and involvement in the production process add significant value to culinary tourism experiences. Economically, the local ingredient-based culinary industry positively impacts the local economy by increasing restaurant revenues and creating new job opportunities.

Farmers and local producers also benefit from higher product prices and stable demand. Nevertheless, challenges such as fluctuations in local ingredient supply, insufficient logistics infrastructure, and low consumer awareness regarding sustainability require strategic solutions, including price stabilization, efficient supply chain management, and educational campaigns. The successful development of sustainable cuisine in Yogyakarta also relies on multi-stakeholder collaboration among government, business actors, local farmers, and the community through supportive policies, training, and integrated promotion. Overall, Yogyakarta has great potential to leverage its wealth of local ingredients to create a sustainable culinary system that supports tourism, strengthens local communities, and preserves cultural heritage. By addressing existing challenges through cross-sector collaboration, Yogyakarta can enhance its position as a globally recognized sustainable culinary tourism destination.

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