

Gastrodiplomacy Strategies Through the 2022 G20 Summit State Dinner and their Implications for the Indonesian Government

Eka Novita Rahayu*, Myrza Rahmanita, Saptarining Wulan

Institut Pariwisata Trisakti, Indonesia

Email: ekanovitarahayu89@gmail.com*, myrzarahmanita@iptrisakti.ac.id,
saptariningwulan@iptrisakti.ac.id

Keywords:	Abstract
Gastrodiplomacy; State Banquet; G20 Summit; Nation Branding; Gastronomic Tourism	This research aimed to analyze the gastrodiplomacy strategy implemented through the state banquet of the 2022 G20 Summit in Bali and to examine its implications for the Government of Indonesia. A qualitative approach with a single holistic case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with seven key informants, retrospective observations of visual documentation and activity archives, and documentary studies of official records and publications related to the G20 Summit. The data were verified through source and technique triangulation and analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings showed that the gastrodiplomacy strategy at the 2022 G20 state banquet was implemented through four complementary dimensions: culinary representation, cultural communication, nation branding, and public engagement. Menu curation, cultural narratives, presentation aesthetics, multisensory experiences, and the involvement of local stakeholders demonstrated that the state banquet was designed as an integrated representation of Indonesia's gastronomic identity. The strategy was perceived to contribute to Indonesia's nation branding by presenting the country as professional, culturally rich, open, and gastronomically diverse, although this study did not establish a direct causal relationship between the event and changes in international perceptions, tourist arrivals, or economic benefits. This study concluded that state banquets could serve as strategic instruments of gastrodiplomacy and provide a reference for the sustainable development of Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy policies and gastronomic tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive era of globalization, diplomacy is no longer confined to political and economic interactions dominated by hard-power instruments, such as military strength, economic pressure, and coercive state policies (Enwere et al., 2025; Jain & Chakrabarti, 2023; Oosthuizen, 2024; Putri et al., 2024). As international relations have become more complex, these instruments are not always effective in building closeness, trust, and positive images between nations (Ansori et al., 2023; Knight, 2022; Ku, 2026). Diplomacy has therefore expanded into the realm of culture and lifestyle as a more persuasive, symbolic, and sustainable approach.

Food, as part of cultural identity and expression, has become an effective medium for introducing a nation's character to the world (Akhatova et al., 2024; Pugra et al., 2025; Putra

et al., 2023; Trisutaguna et al., 2025). Through taste, narratives, and culinary experiences, a country can convey messages of friendship, openness, and cultural values to the international community. Within this context, the concept of gastrodiploamacy emerged as a soft-power strategy that combines culture, the creative economy, and tourism to strengthen a nation's image and influence on the global stage. As a diplomatic practice rich in symbolic meaning and experience, gastrodiploamacy cannot be understood solely through quantitative measurements. Interpreting the symbols, narratives, and experiences accompanying culinary presentations requires deep contextual understanding; therefore, gastrodiploamacy is more appropriately analyzed through a qualitative approach that emphasizes interpretation, context, and the construction of meaning behind culinary practices as instruments of cultural diplomacy.

Gastronomy is a tangible manifestation of culture because it relates not only to food as a biological necessity but also carries historical, symbolic, and collective identity values. In diplomacy, this gives rise to the concept of gastrodiploamacy, namely the use of cuisine as an instrument of cultural communication to strengthen a country's image and influence internationally. As part of culture, gastronomy is closely linked to tourism because culture is one of the main pillars that enrich the tourist experience. Gastrodiploamacy can therefore be understood as the intersection between culture and tourism, in which cuisine functions both as a cultural identity marker and as a strategic instrument for nation branding and the development of gastronomic tourism.

A number of countries have demonstrated success in using gastrodiploamacy as a tool of cultural diplomacy and tourism promotion. Thailand pioneered this approach through the Global Thai program (2002). Data from Thailand's Department of Foreign Trade showed that the number of Thai restaurants abroad increased from 17,478 in January 2024 to 18,852 by May 2025, supported by the Thai SELECT policy and chef training programs that strengthened taste and service standards while encouraging food exports. South Korea achieved comparable success through the Hansik Globalization Project (2009), which positioned Korean food as part of global cultural influence alongside the Hallyu wave. The initiative was coordinated by the Korean Food Foundation through dramas, variety shows, digital media, and international culinary festivals supported by celebrity chefs. Japan strengthened its position through Washoku diplomacy, reinforced when UNESCO designated washoku as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. A 2023 survey by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries recorded approximately 187,000 Japanese restaurants abroad, representing more than a threefold increase compared with a decade earlier. Peru strategically positioned gastronomy as the foundation of its nation brand through the Cocina Peruana para el Mundo initiative, supported by cross-ministerial collaboration, organizations such as APEGA, and culinary ambassador Gastón Acurio. France, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has implemented the Goût de/Good France program since 2015, organizing simultaneous dinners in more than 150 countries in collaboration with Michelin-starred chefs to promote French art de vivre. These practices demonstrate that cuisine is not merely a consumer product but also a strategic instrument of public diplomacy and tourism promotion, through which countries communicate cultural values, national identity, and positive images to the international community (Nye, 2004; Rockower, 2012).

Indonesia has extensive experience in hosting major international forums, including the 1994 and 2013 APEC summits and several ASEAN summits. Unlike regional ASEAN and

APEC forums, the G20 is a global economic forum that brings together the world's major economies, and Indonesia's position as the only Southeast Asian member provides strategic value as both a host and regional representative in shaping global diplomatic narratives. Hosting the 2022 G20 Bali Summit strengthened Indonesia's political standing, increased international confidence, encouraged cross-sector economic cooperation, and reinforced Indonesia's image as a professional and culturally rich nation. Indonesia also possesses substantial culinary potential as a foundation for gastrodiploamacy. Its geographic, ethnic, and cultural diversity has produced a rich Nusantara (archipelagic) culinary heritage characterized by diverse flavors, traditions, and philosophical values. Through the Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program, the government has targeted the expansion of Indonesian restaurants abroad and increased exports of spice and seasoning products, directing gastrodiploamacy toward strengthening nation branding as well as economic diploamacy.

This strategic momentum became evident when Indonesia hosted the 17th G20 Summit on 15–16 November 2022 in Bali, the largest international forum organized during President Joko Widodo's administration, involving 23 ministries and 9 non-ministerial institutions. As a platform for global diploamacy, the G20 Summit provided opportunities for gastrodiploamacy through a series of state banquets featuring Nusantara cuisine. Indonesia received notable recognition for the event, including appreciation from International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach during the Leaders' Luncheon at the Bamboo Dome, The Apurva Kempinski Bali. Meanwhile, the Welcoming Dinner at Garuda Wisnu Kencana showcased Nusantara cuisine from various regions as a representation of Indonesia's gastronomic wealth, and the Spouse Program introduced Nusantara food culture through a Food Theatre concept that combined culinary experiences, narratives, visual elements, and cultural performances.

Conceptually, the state banquets of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit fall within the domain of culinary diploamacy, as food was used in formal inter-state relations and served directly to heads of state and international delegations as part of diplomatic protocol. This study, however, adopted gastrodiploamacy as a broader framework because the organization of the banquets involved not only diplomatic and protocol actors but also a wider range of stakeholders, including ministries and agencies, culinary advisors, chefs, suppliers, media representatives, culinary industry actors, and local stakeholders within the gastronomic ecosystem. Culinary diploamacy therefore explains the formal setting of the banquet, while gastrodiploamacy was used to understand the broader representation and communication of Indonesian cuisine through stakeholder involvement, media dissemination, and the culinary ecosystem beyond the banquet setting itself. Although various official publications have documented the menus, venues, and activities of the G20 Summit, the process of designing the culinary strategy, the considerations underlying its implementation, the coordination among actors, and its implications for the Government of Indonesia have not been documented or examined comprehensively within a single case study. This study did not assume that the gastrodiploamacy strategy implemented through the state banquet was optimal, successfully transformed international perceptions, or generated specific economic benefits. Instead, it sought to understand how the strategy was designed and implemented, the meanings attributed by the involved actors, and the implications that could be interpretively identified from interviews, field notes, official documents, visual materials, and related publications, without

claiming to establish causal relationships or measure the magnitude of changes in national image, public interest, tourist arrivals, or economic benefits.

Based on this context, this study addressed the following research questions: (1) how was the gastrodiploamacy strategy designed and implemented through the state banquet of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit; and (2) what were the implications of implementing the gastrodiploamacy strategy through the state banquet of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit for the Government of Indonesia? Accordingly, this study aimed to analyze and explain the process of designing and implementing the gastrodiploamacy strategy through the 2022 G20 Bali state banquet and to interpret its implications for the Government of Indonesia. Practically, the findings are expected to provide input for the Presidential Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in planning, implementing, and evaluating state banquets as instruments of gastrodiploamacy. Theoretically, this study contributes to the scholarship on gastrodiploamacy strategies, particularly within the context of state banquets at global multilateral forums, and expands understanding of the role of cuisine as a medium of identity representation, symbolic communication, nation branding, and public engagement.

This study drew on the concept of soft power introduced by Nye (2004), which explains a state's ability to influence other actors through the attraction of culture, political values, and foreign policy rather than through military force or economic coercion. Food functions as a medium of soft power because, although physically consumed, it is experienced emotionally, symbolically, and multisensorially (Cabral et al., 2024). One concrete application of food-based soft power is gastrodiploamacy, a term popularized by Rockower (2012) as the strategy of "winning hearts and minds through stomachs," which was later positioned within the framework of soft-power diplomacy (Rockower, 2014). Gastrodiploamacy differs from culinary diplomacy: the latter refers more narrowly to the use of food within formal inter-state relations, such as state banquets and official visits (Mendelson, 2023), whereas gastrodiploamacy has a broader scope within public diplomacy, targeting not only state officials but also the wider international public through culinary campaigns, festivals, national restaurants abroad, media platforms, and the involvement of the culinary industry and diaspora communities (Hara et al., 2023).

Synthesizing the works of Rockower (2020), Demir and Alper (2021), Anholt (2020), and Conejo and Wooliscroft (2021), this study constructed four analytical dimensions of gastrodiploamacy strategy, as summarized in Table 2. Culinary representation refers to the use of cuisine to represent a nation's identity, character, geographic diversity, and traditions, examined through menu selection and regional representation, the use of local ingredients, processing techniques and flavors, presentation aesthetics, and the symbolic and philosophical values of dishes. Cultural communication refers to the conveyance of identity, values, history, and character through food and the elements accompanying the banquet experience, examined through dish narratives and philosophies, menu naming, visual symbolism, multisensory gastronomic experiences, thematic coherence, and the integration of art and supporting elements. Nation branding refers to the strategic process of communicating a country's identity, character, quality, and positioning through cuisine, examined through the identity displayed, Indonesia's positioning, consistency of representation, credibility of the banquet experience, gastronomic distinctiveness, and the reputation the government sought to support, without assuming a direct and measurable change in international perceptions. Public engagement, as

narrowly defined in this study, refers to stakeholder involvement within the ecosystem of organizing and disseminating information about the state banquet. This dimension was examined through stakeholder participation, the involvement of local actors, forms and levels of involvement, coordination among actors, information dissemination, and the consistency of information conveyed, based only on verifiable interview and documentary evidence. These four dimensions were treated as complementary analytical lenses rather than as a linear or causal sequence, and their synthesis was used to identify the implications of the gastrodiploamacy strategy for the Government of Indonesia.

Table 1. Previous Research and Relevance to This Study

Author (Year)	Focus	Method	Key Finding	Relevance
Rockower (2012)	Concept of gastrodiploamacy as a culinary-based public-diplomacy strategy (Thailand, South Korea)	Qualitative-descriptive conceptual study	Gastrodiploamacy is effective as soft power supporting nation branding through national cuisine	Basis for culinary representation, cultural communication, and nation branding dimensions
Demir & Alper (2021)	Analysis of G20 summit menus as symbolic communication	Content and narrative analysis of official menus	Official menus function as symbolic communication strengthening the host country's cultural identity	Directly relevant to the 2022 G20 Bali state-banquet context
Cabral et al. (2024)	Systematic review of gastronomy as a diplomatic tool	Systematic literature review (70+ articles)	Identifies menu representation, cultural narrative, and presentation aesthetics as core elements	Framework for culinary representation, cultural communication, and public engagement
Al Ghafiqi (2023)	Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy strategy for nation branding	Literature and policy analysis	Indonesian gastrodiploamacy supports national positioning through culinary promotion	Relevant to nation branding and public engagement
Parmato et al. (2023)	Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) campaign	Qualitative content analysis	ISUTW strengthens positive global perception of Indonesian cuisine	Example of public engagement and nation branding
Wahyuni & Indrawati (2023)	Public diplomacy through the G20 gala dinner	Qualitative, literature and documentation	The G20 banquet drew international attention and supported Indonesia's nation branding	Empirical support for culinary representation, nation branding, and

Author (Year)	Focus	Method	Key Finding	Relevance
				public engagement

Source: Researcher's design, adapted from the reviewed literature (2026)

Table 2. Theoretical Framework of the Gastrodiplomacy Strategy

Layer	Concept	Key Source(s)
Foundational	Soft power	Nye (2004); Cabral et al. (2024); Kusnedi et al. (2025)
Focus	Gastrodiplomacy	Rockower (2012, 2020); Mendelson (2023); Hara et al. (2023)
Operational	Gastrodiplomacy strategy	Rockower (2020); Demir & Alper (2021); Anholt (2020); Conejo & Wooliscroft (2021)
Analytical dimensions	Culinary Representation; Cultural Communication; Nation Branding; Public Engagement	Synthesis of the above sources, adapted to the case
Outcome	Implications for the Government of Indonesia	Researcher's synthesis (2026)

Source: Researcher's synthesis, adapted from Rockower (2020), Demir & Alper (2021), Anholt (2020), and Conejo & Wooliscroft (2021)

Although various official publications have documented the menus, venues, and activities of the G20 Summit, the process of designing the culinary strategy, the considerations underlying its implementation, inter-stakeholder coordination, and its implications for the Government of Indonesia have not been documented or examined comprehensively within a single case study. Previous research on gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia remains limited to macro-level policy analyses, such as the Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program (Parmato et al., 2023), or literature reviews on public diplomacy through the G20 banquet (Wahyuni & Indrawati, 2023). However, no study has comprehensively examined the process of designing and implementing gastrodiplomacy strategies at the 2022 G20 Bali Summit state banquet through in-depth interviews with key actors, including culinary advisors, executive chefs, the Presidential Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, while integrating the dimensions of culinary representation, cultural communication, nation branding, and public engagement within a single analytical framework. Therefore, the research gaps identified in this study include the absence of a comprehensive case study on the gastrodiplomacy strategy of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit state banquet, the lack of analysis based on the direct perspectives of key actors, and the absence of strategic implications for the sustainable development of Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy policy.

The novelty of this research lies in several aspects. This study represents a holistic single-case study that examines the gastrodiplomacy strategy of the 2022 Bali G20 Summit through four integrated analytical dimensions: culinary representation, cultural communication, nation branding, and public engagement. These dimensions were synthesized from the frameworks of Rockower (2020), Demir and Alper (2021), Anholt (2020), and Conejo and Wooliscroft (2021), while incorporating firsthand perspectives from seven key informants involved in the design and implementation of the banquet. This study not only analyzes the strategies applied

but also formulates policy implications for the Government of Indonesia based on the experiences and perspectives of relevant actors, thereby providing theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Indonesian gastrodiploamacy. The qualitative approach with a case study design enabled an in-depth understanding of the strategy design process, culinary decision-making considerations, inter-institutional coordination, and the meanings constructed by the actors involved, which could not be fully captured through a quantitative approach alone.

Based on this context, this study addressed two research questions: how was the gastrodiploamacy strategy designed and implemented through the state banquet of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit, and what were its implications for the Government of Indonesia? Accordingly, the purpose of this research was to analyze the process of designing and implementing the gastrodiploamacy strategy and to interpret its implications in relation to culinary representation, cultural communication, nation branding, and public engagement. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical benefits by enriching the study of cultural diplomacy and international relations, as well as by contributing to the understanding of Nye's (2004) soft power concept and Rockower's (2012, 2014, 2020) gastrodiploamacy framework. Practically, this study is expected to provide strategic input for the Presidential Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in planning, implementing, and evaluating state banquets as structured and measurable instruments of gastrodiploamacy. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for academics and future researchers in developing more comprehensive studies on gastrodiploamacy.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a single holistic case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to understand in depth the process of designing and implementing the gastrodiploamacy strategy through the state banquet and to interpret its implications for the Government of Indonesia based on the experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders. Following Creswell and Poth (2018), the research process was guided by interpretive assumptions to explore the meanings constructed by individuals or groups regarding a social phenomenon through data collected in a natural setting and analyzed based on emerging patterns, categories, and themes.

The single case study design was applied because the research focused on one specific and bounded case: the gastrodiploamacy strategy implemented through the state banquet of the 2022 G20 Bali Summit. The case was analyzed as a bounded system involving specific time, location, actors, activities, and institutional contexts. The holistic design enabled the analysis of the overall strategy process, including the Leaders' Luncheon, Welcoming Dinner, menu selection, ingredient utilization, food preparation techniques, food safety and quality standards, presentation aesthetics, dish narratives, service processes, and stakeholder involvement. These elements were examined as interconnected components of a unified case, with the four analytical dimensions functioning as interpretive perspectives rather than separate case units.

Spatially, the case was bounded by Bali as the location of the event and Jakarta (Istana Merdeka and Istana Negara) as the center of institutional coordination. Temporally, the case focused on the summit held on 15–16 November 2022, while data collection and analysis were conducted retrospectively from September to November 2025. The analysis incorporated the researcher's field notes from 2022, when the researcher was involved as part of the banquet organizing team, along with official documents and archives, including event scripts, menu lists, photographs, videos, and press releases, which were publicly available or accessible

through authorized sources. This retrospective approach enabled the reconstruction of the event chronology while supporting analytical verification during the 2025 research period. Given the researcher's insider position during the 2022 event, reflexivity was applied throughout the research process. The researcher distinguished personal experiences as an event organizer from verifiable research evidence and did not rely solely on personal recollections in developing the findings. Bias mitigation was conducted through source triangulation, technique triangulation, document verification, information confirmation, and reflective note-taking during the coding and analysis processes.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from seven key informants selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, strategic roles, operational responsibilities, or academic expertise related to the organization of the 2022 G20 Bali state banquet, as presented in Table 3. This composition provided conceptual, strategic, institutional, operational, and academic perspectives on the case. The adequacy of the seven informants was determined based on the relevance and depth of information obtained, the representation of informant categories, the connection of data with the four analytical dimensions, and the emergence of recurring themes, including menu curation, identity representation, narrative delivery, banquet standards, inter-actor coordination, nation branding, and stakeholder involvement. This study did not include heads of state, international delegations, or the international public as informants due to access limitations and the study's focus on the perspectives of organizers and relevant domestic stakeholders. Therefore, the findings primarily reflected the perspectives of organizers, practitioners, academics, and domestic stakeholders rather than the direct experiences of international delegates or audiences. Secondary data were obtained from official government documents, media publications, and academic literature related to gastrodiploamacy, soft power, nation branding, cultural diplomacy, and gastronomic tourism, including comparative practices from Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and France.

Table 3. Key Informants of the Study

Code	Position / Role	Institution
I-1	Culinary Advisor, 2022 G20 Summit	Independent gastronomy consultant
I-2	Executive Chef, 2022 G20 Summit	Independent (celebrity chef)
I-3	Deputy for Palace Administration and Management	Presidential Secretariat
I-4	Head, Banquet and Supplies Division (2022–2026)	Presidential Secretariat
I-5	Junior Diplomat, Directorate of Public Diplomacy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
I-6	Head, Promotion and Partnership for Regional Activities	Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy
I-7	Assistant Professor (Gastronomy)	Poltekpar NHI Bandung

Source: Researcher's design (2025)

Data were collected through three techniques. Retrospective observation was conducted based on the researcher's direct experience as part of the 2022 banquet organizing team and

was reconstructed and verified through field notes, visual documentation, and other supporting data sources. Since the researcher had not conducted formal research observation during the event, this technique was not categorized as non-participant observation. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted once with each informant for approximately 45–60 minutes, either in person or through online video conferences, following informed consent for recording and data use. The interview recordings were transcribed using the Clipto automatic transcription application and manually verified against the original recordings to ensure the accuracy of content, informant and institutional names, technical terms, and dish names. Documentary studies were conducted to obtain written, visual, and audiovisual data related to the planning, implementation, and publication of the banquet. The documents included internal materials (banquet concepts, menu descriptions, venue layouts, seating arrangements, serving protocols, and event schedules) and public materials (press releases, official government news, ministry publications, event photographs, and videos), as well as national and international media coverage. Documents were selected purposively based on their relevance to one or more of the four analytical dimensions.

To enhance data credibility, this study applied source and technique triangulation by comparing and confirming information obtained from different sources and through the three data collection techniques. Triangulation was also conducted among informants with different backgrounds, positions, and levels of involvement. Consistent information across sources was used to strengthen the findings, while discrepancies were further examined through additional data sources to identify the context and possible reasons for differences.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of three main processes. Data condensation involved repeated examination of interview transcripts, retrospective observation notes, and documentary materials, followed by data selection, organization, simplification, and coding based on the four analytical dimensions while allowing relevant themes to emerge. Data display involved systematically organizing coded data into analytical matrices, tables, interview excerpts, visual documentation, and thematic narratives to facilitate comparisons among informants and establish connections between interview findings, observation data, and documentary evidence. Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting identified patterns, categories, themes, similarities, and differences to answer the research questions. Conclusions were developed through continuous comparison and triangulation across informants and documentary evidence rather than relying on a single data source. Any discrepancies that could not be sufficiently verified were retained as variations or acknowledged as data limitations rather than being forced into a unified conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia's Strategic Position in the G20 Forum

The Group of Twenty (G20) is an international cooperation forum comprising the world's major economies, established in 1999 in response to the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis to broaden global representation beyond the G7 and strengthen international financial stability. Its status was elevated from a Finance Ministers–Central Bank Governors forum to a Leaders' Summit after the 2008 global financial crisis. Originally comprising 19 countries and the European Union, the G20 expanded in 2023 with the African Union joining as a permanent

member, so its members now collectively represent more than 60% of the world's population, 75% of global trade, and around 80% of global GDP. The forum has no permanent secretariat; the presidency rotates annually, supported by a Troika mechanism, and works through a Finance Track and a Sherpa Track covering non-financial issues such as culture, tourism, health, energy, environment, agriculture, the digital economy, and women's empowerment. Table 5 summarizes the chronology of G20 summit hosts from 2008 to 2026.

Indonesia has been a G20 member since 1999 and holds a strategic position as the only Southeast Asian representative in the forum and the largest developing economy in ASEAN, often regarded as a bridge builder between developed and developing countries. Indonesia's momentum peaked when it hosted the 17th G20 Summit on 15–16 November 2022 in Bali under the theme “Recover Together, Recover Stronger,” involving 23 ministries and 9 non-ministerial institutions. According to the G20 Communication and Media Team (2022), the presidency contributed approximately IDR 7.4 trillion to GDP, drove domestic consumption of IDR 1.7 trillion, and absorbed around 33,000 workers in the transportation, MICE, and MSME sectors, while generating roughly USD 8 billion (approximately IDR 125 trillion) in cooperation and investment commitments from partner countries. Foreign tourist arrivals to Indonesia rose from 5.89 million in 2022 to 11.68 million in 2023 and 13.90 million in 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025), a recovery trend this study treats as contextual background rather than evidence of a direct causal link between the gastrodiploacy strategy and increased tourist arrivals, since post-pandemic tourism recovery was influenced by multiple factors. Within this strategic context, the state banquets of the G20 Bali Summit used Nusantara cuisine to represent Indonesia's identity, convey cultural narratives, and support the country's intended positioning at the international forum.

Findings from Interviews and Documentation

Findings from in-depth interviews with the seven key informants, verified and enriched through retrospective observation and documentary study, were organized and coded according to the four analytical dimensions. Table 4 presents a condensed matrix of representative findings across the dimensions of Culinary Representation (CR), Cultural Communication (CC), Nation Branding (NB), and Public Engagement (PE).

Table 4. Condensed Matrix of Interview and Documentation Findings

Dimension	Informant	Aspect Examined	Key Finding (Summary)
Culinary Representation	I-1	Food safety and cultural reflection	The menu benchmark rests on food safety, quality, and reflection of Indonesian culinary culture
Culinary Representation	I-4	Regional representation	Menu selection spans “Aceh to eastern Indonesia,” highlighting cross-regional diversity
Culinary Representation	I-2	Local ingredient sourcing	Local ingredients are prioritized but adjusted to international quality standards
Cultural Communication	I-3	Visual storytelling	The menu booklet maps Indonesia and dish origins to strengthen cultural learning

Dimension	Informant	Aspect Examined	Key Finding (Summary)
Cultural Communication	I-2	Thematic cohesion	Theme, decoration, and menu must “speak with one voice” to avoid a fragmented message
Cultural Communication	I-7	Multisensory experience	Gastronomy engages personal, emotional experience beyond political substance
Nation Branding	I-5	International appreciation	Guests offered notable praise for the banquet and cultural presentation
Nation Branding	I-3	Diplomacy and rapport	A memorable banquet is perceived to reinforce diplomatic rapport
Nation Branding	I-7	National brand image	Gastronomy contributes to shaping Indonesia's national brand image
Public Engagement	I-6	Local-actor involvement	MSMEs and tourism villages are reported as involved in ingredient supply
Public Engagement	I-5	Narrative consistency	Cultural and culinary narrative is kept consistent across G20 communications
Public Engagement	I-2	Media exposure	Menu origins are publicized to broaden public awareness of Indonesian cuisine

Source: Researcher's design, based on interview transcripts and documentation (2025)

Culinary Representation: Menu Curation as a Representation of National Identity

The dimension of culinary representation formed the primary foundation of the gastrodiploamacy strategy at the 2022 G20 Bali Summit. Menu curation was not oriented solely toward aesthetics and taste but proceeded from a principle of caution and precision as an official representation of the state, grounded in three main principles: food safety, international quality standards, and representation of Indonesian cultural identity. Food safety was treated as an absolute prerequisite—a “zero mistake logic”—with every stage of processing, storage, and serving supervised by the presidential security detail's health team and reinforced through layered food tasting involving the organizing committee and the G20 culinary advisor. As one informant from the culinary-advisory team stated, the benchmark was food safety, quality, and the reflection of Indonesian culinary culture, underscoring that the state banquet was not positioned as mere ceremonial consumption but as an official representation of the state, in which each dish carried both protocolary legitimacy and a symbolic mandate to represent Indonesian cultural identity before world leaders.

This representation was implemented concretely through dishes such as Aneka Ratna Mutumanikam, Nusantara, Kayangan, and Nusantara Delight, designed as a symbolic narrative representing Indonesia's geographic and cultural diversity within a single conceptual whole, framed through metaphorical naming such as “diversity in one plate.” Local ingredients from regions spanning Aceh, Bangka, Mandalika, Java, Bali, Flores, and eastern Indonesia were combined with modern presentation techniques through a strategy of culinary translation, in

which Nusantara flavors were rendered in international gastronomic standards without losing their original character; spice levels, halal principles, and allergen management were adjusted deliberately to ensure inclusivity for guests across cultures. A Presidential Secretariat informant noted that the G20 menu ranged “from Aceh to eastern Indonesia,” reflecting a deliberate decision to highlight cross-regional representation as capital for Indonesia's cultural diplomacy. This approach was reinforced through a Food Theatre presentation during the summit's side program, in which dishes carried narratives about ingredient origin, local food practices, and traditional processing techniques, while the menu booklet, designed with a map of Indonesia and regional markers for each dish's origin, functioned as a diplomatic text and a medium of visual storytelling. Overall, the culinary-representation dimension shows that the state banquet functioned not merely as an aesthetic or culinary display but as a strategic instrument of formal state diplomacy, consistent with the view of cuisine as a means of shaping perception and national image (Rockower, 2012; Demir & Alper, 2021) and as a source of soft power that operates through attraction and trust rather than coercion (Nye, 2004).

Cultural Communication: Multisensory Experience as a Medium of Cultural Communication

The cultural-communication dimension was realized through a systematic effort to make cuisine and all supporting banquet elements a medium of non-verbal cultural narrative, conveyed not only through taste and appearance but also through thematic consistency, spatial arrangement, decoration, the menu booklet, tableware, staff attire, and accompanying music, forming a single reinforcing message so that the banquet functioned as a cultural performance. The menu booklet, described by an informant as depicting “a map of Indonesia and the origin of each dish,” was designed as a visual-storytelling device guiding guests to understand Indonesia's regional and cultural diversity through a structured culinary route. Custom tableware produced by a Balinese ceramics house functioned not merely as utensils but as visual artifacts communicating nature, sustainability, and local craftsmanship through forms, textures, and motifs inspired by Nusantara culture. The choice of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana cultural park as the venue for the Welcoming Dinner and cultural performance was, according to the creative director, intended so that guests would “return with pride in Indonesia and a sense of how rich Indonesia is,” positioning space and scale as deliberate media of non-verbal cultural communication.

This multisensory experience was extended through Food Theatre performances that combined storytelling, multimedia visuals, music, and dishes from across Indonesia's regions. An informant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs observed that “non-plenary sessions gave guests a maximum experience,” while a chef informant emphasized that “everything had to speak with one voice, from the theme to the food,” underscoring the importance of coherence among cuisine, visuals, and performance so that the cultural narrative was not fragmented. As an academic informant summarized, “gastronomy touches personal experience, not just politics”—consistent with the view that cultural diplomacy and soft power operate through symbol, experience, and narrative as tools of persuasive communication (Nye, 2004; Cabral et al., 2024)

Nation Branding: The State Banquet as a Showcase of Indonesia's Image and Professionalism

In the nation-branding dimension, the state banquet functioned as a showcase of Indonesia's reputation and professionalism before the international community, an experience-based platform through which world leaders could assess Indonesia's capacity, character, and identity directly. This was reflected in positive responses during and after the event, including a Ministry of Foreign Affairs informant's observation that "there was much praise... especially for the banquet and the culture," indicating that the banquet was perceived as a concrete representation of the quality of the event's organization and the maturity of Indonesian diplomacy. National and international coverage recorded spontaneous appreciation from world leaders for the quality of the banquet, the hospitality of the host, and the cultural richness displayed, expressed not only through formal praise but also informal interaction and continued conversation outside the official agenda. The direct presence of the President and First Lady at the state banquets further reinforced the symbolic dimension of nation branding, signaling commitment to hospitality, respect for state guests, and Indonesia's seriousness in building equal and dignified international relations.

Analytically, nation branding is formed when the concrete experience of state guests transforms into a reputational memory of a nation, consistent with Anholt's (2020) view that a country's image is built not through slogans or campaigns alone but through credible, directly experienced reality. As a Presidential Secretariat informant put it, "diplomacy grew stronger after a memorable banquet," indicating that the banquet functioned as a rapport builder that created an atmosphere of trust and interpersonal comfort, elements central to modern diplomacy (Nye, 2004). Based on informants' perspectives and the documentation analyzed, the banquet is perceived to have contributed to presenting Indonesia as a professional host capable of combining formal diplomacy with rich national culture, although this contribution cannot be used to conclude a direct change in international perception.

Public Engagement: Stakeholder Involvement in the Culinary Value Chain

The public-engagement dimension shows that organizing the G20 Bali Summit involved various stakeholders and local actors in a series of supporting activities. A Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy informant noted that "MSMEs and tourism villages were involved in supplying ingredients," although the research data do not provide detailed information on the number and identity of the MSMEs involved, the type of materials or products supplied, the volume of supply, or the form of their involvement in the state banquet specifically. At the national level, official government data show that the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, together with Smesco, curated 1,024 MSMEs and designated around 20 as official G20 souvenir suppliers from the crafts, creative-economy, fashion, food, cosmetics, and fitness sectors, while the Ministry of Finance presented 52 MSMEs, 17 of them under its own fostering program, at a product exhibition during the Third Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Bali. These data indicate MSME involvement within the broader ecosystem of the G20 presidency but do not specifically prove MSME involvement in supplying materials or products for the state banquet itself.

Informal public engagement was also evident when several world leaders were seen visiting a local café outside the formal protocol during the summit, interacting with the local dining scene and consuming Balinese dishes. This provides contextual evidence of the reach

of Indonesian gastronomic experience during the G20 but not proof that such visits resulted directly from the state-banquet experience. The dissemination of information about the menu, dish origin, and culinary narrative through mass media, official documentation, and digital platforms extended public access to information about Indonesian gastronomy, and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs informant confirmed that “we ensured the cultural and culinary narrative remained consistent throughout the G20,” reflecting cross-institutional coordination to keep the gastrodiploamacy message aligned. However, this study does not measure changes in public awareness, acceptance, behavior, or the economic benefits that may have resulted.

Table 5. Schedule of G20 Summit Host Countries (2008–2026)

No	Host Country	Year (City)	Leader
1	United States	2008 (Washington D.C.)	George W. Bush
2	United Kingdom	2009 (London)	Gordon Brown
3	United States	2009 (Pittsburgh)	Barack Obama
4	Canada	2010 (Toronto)	Stephen Harper
5	South Korea	2010 (Seoul)	Lee Myung-bak
6	France	2011 (Cannes)	Nicolas Sarkozy
7	Mexico	2012 (Los Cabos)	Felipe Calderón
8	Russia	2013 (St. Petersburg)	Vladimir Putin
9	Australia	2014 (Brisbane)	Tony Abbott
10	Turkey	2015 (Antalya)	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
11	China	2016 (Hangzhou)	Xi Jinping
12	Germany	2017 (Hamburg)	Angela Merkel
13	Argentina	2018 (Buenos Aires)	Mauricio Macri
14	Japan	2019 (Osaka)	Shinzo Abe
15	Saudi Arabia	2020 (Riyadh, virtual)	Salman bin Abdulaziz
16	Italy	2021 (Rome)	Mario Draghi
17	Indonesia	2022 (Bali)	Joko Widodo
18	India	2023 (New Delhi)	Narendra Modi
19	Brazil	2024 (Rio de Janeiro)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
20	South Africa	2025 (Johannesburg)	Cyril Ramaphosa
21	United States	2026 (Miami)	Donald Trump

Source: Researcher's design (2025)

Integration of the Four Dimensions and Implications for the Government of Indonesia

Taken together, the four dimensions are not positioned as a linear or causal sequence but as complementary analytical lenses for understanding how the gastrodiploamacy strategy was designed and applied at the 2022 G20 Bali state banquet. Culinary representation explains how Indonesia's gastronomic identity was represented; cultural communication explains how narrative and multisensory experience conveyed cultural values; nation branding explains the

identity and positioning Indonesia sought to support; and public engagement explains stakeholder involvement and the dissemination of verifiable information.

Synthesizing these findings, several implications for the Government of Indonesia can be interpreted, understood as strategic consequences drawn from informants' perspectives, documentary evidence, and the organizational context, rather than as quantitatively measured cause-and-effect relationships. First, careful menu curation, service quality, presentation aesthetics, and cultural narrative are perceived to contribute to Indonesia's nation branding by presenting the country as culturally rich and capable of hosting internationally standardized banquets. Second, the gastronomic experience—combining taste, visuals, atmosphere, service, performance, and narrative—is perceived to support Indonesia's public diplomacy by fostering a more relaxed atmosphere and a positive impression of Indonesian hospitality and culture. Third, the involvement of local actors, the use of regional ingredients and products, and media exposure of Nusantara cuisine open opportunities for promoting gastronomic tourism and the creative economy, although this study does not directly measure changes in tourist interest, economic benefit, or international public response. Fourth, these findings point to institutional needs—more structured national gastrodiploamacy guidelines, stronger documentation systems (a menu bank, dish-narrative archives, records of local ingredients, presentation standards, visual documentation, and post-event evaluation), and closer coordination among protocol, diplomatic, tourism, culinary-advisory, and media actors from the planning stage onward—that could strengthen the replicability of gastrodiploamacy practice at future international forums.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the gastrodiploamacy strategy implemented through the 2022 G20 Bali state banquet was designed and applied across four complementary dimensions: culinary representation, cultural communication, nation branding, and public engagement. Through these dimensions, Indonesia curated Nusantara menus based on food safety, quality standards, and cultural identity; conveyed cultural narratives through menu booklets, tableware, spatial design, performances, and multisensory experiences; positioned itself as a culturally rich, hospitable, creative, and professional host; and engaged government institutions, culinary advisors, chefs, media representatives, and local actors in supporting the gastrodiploamacy message, without claiming a direct causal change in international image, tourist arrivals, or economic benefits. Based on informants' perspectives and documentary evidence, the strategy was perceived to support the Government of Indonesia's efforts to represent cultural identity, strengthen public diplomacy, and create opportunities for gastronomic tourism and creative economy promotion, although the findings primarily reflected the perspectives of domestic organizers, practitioners, and academics rather than international delegates or the broader public. The Government of Indonesia—particularly the Presidential Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy—was therefore advised to formulate a more structured national gastrodiploamacy guideline covering menu curation, food safety standards, cultural narratives, and local actor involvement; strengthen institutional documentation of state banquets; enhance coordination among protocol, diplomatic, tourism, culinary, and media stakeholders from the planning stage; and optimize digital dissemination of banquet narratives to reach wider

audiences. Future research is encouraged to involve international delegates or foreign media representatives as informants, examine Indonesian gastrodiplomacy practices at other multilateral forums for comparative insights, provide greater attention to banquet logistics as part of cultural diplomacy strategies, adopt interdisciplinary approaches connecting gastronomy, international relations, and tourism, and develop measurable indicators for evaluating gastrodiplomacy and nation-branding outcomes.

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