



## Gastronomy of Traditional Chinese, Dayak, and Malay (Tidayu) Cuisine: Enhancing Culinary Experience and Profitability of Star-Rated Hotels in Pontianak City

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines how the gastronomic values embedded in traditional Chinese, Dayak, and Malay (Tidayu) cuisine can be leveraged to enhance culinary experiences and improve hotel profitability in Pontianak City. Adopting a qualitative exploratory design, the study draws on in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving hotel managers, chefs, and guests in star-rated hotels. The findings suggest that gastronomic practices are not merely functional but constitute symbolic systems that encode cultural values such as harmony, social cohesion, spirituality, and ecological consciousness. When strategically curated within hotel services, these values reconfigure culinary offerings into immersive, meaning-laden experiences that extend beyond consumption. This process enhances customer perceived value by integrating functional, emotional, and symbolic dimensions. The study argues that the commodification of culturally grounded gastronomy can serve as a strategic mechanism for differentiation and sustained competitive advantage. It contributes to the literature by bridging cultural theory and hospitality management, demonstrating how local food heritage can be operationalized as a value-creation strategy that aligns experiential consumption with long-term profitability and cultural sustainability.

**KEYWORDS:** Culinary Experience, Cultural Tourism, Gastronomy, Local Wisdom, Hotel Profitability, Tidayu Cuisine.

### INTRODUCTION

The global hospitality and tourism industry has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, shifting from a product- and service-oriented paradigm toward an experience-driven economy. This transition reflects changing consumer preferences, where travelers increasingly seek meaningful, authentic, and immersive experiences rather than standardized services. Within this evolving landscape, gastronomy has emerged as a critical domain through which destinations and hospitality providers can create differentiated value. Culinary experiences are no longer confined to the satisfaction of physiological needs; instead, they function as complex cultural practices that embody identity, history, and social meaning. As highlighted by Anne-Mette Hjalager and Greg Richards, gastronomy plays a strategic role in tourism by linking food consumption with cultural experience, thereby enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor engagement. In parallel, the concept of the experience economy, as articulated by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, underscores that economic value is increasingly derived from the creation of memorable and meaningful experiences rather than from goods or services alone. Despite the growing scholarly attention to culinary tourism and hospitality experiences, much of the existing literature remains centered on tangible aspects such as food quality, service performance, and customer satisfaction metrics. While these dimensions are undoubtedly important, they often overlook the deeper cultural, symbolic, and philosophical values embedded in traditional cuisines. From an anthropological perspective, food constitutes a symbolic system that communicates social structures, cultural norms, and collective identities. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for instance, conceptualizes food as a medium through which cultural meanings are structured and expressed. Similarly, the notion of local wisdom emphasizes that traditional culinary practices encapsulate accumulated knowledge, ethical values, and adaptive strategies developed through long-term interactions between communities and their environments. However, the integration of these intangible cultural dimensions into contemporary hospitality practices remains limited, particularly within formal and standardized settings such as star-rated hotels.

This gap is particularly evident in multicultural urban contexts such as Pontianak City, Indonesia, where Chinese, Dayak, and Malay (Tidayu) cultures coexist and interact dynamically. The culinary traditions of these communities represent a rich and diverse gastronomic heritage characterized by unique ingredients, preparation techniques, and philosophical meanings. For example,



Chinese cuisine often reflects principles of balance and harmony, Dayak culinary practices emphasize a close relationship with nature and sustainability, while Malay cuisine embodies social values of hospitality, warmth, and communal bonding. Collectively, these traditions form a distinctive cultural asset that has the potential to enrich tourism experiences and strengthen local identity. Nevertheless, in practice, many star-rated hotels in Pontianak continue to rely on standardized, globally oriented menus, thereby underutilizing the cultural richness of local cuisine as a strategic resource. From a theoretical standpoint, the integration of gastronomic values into hospitality services can be understood through the frameworks of experiential consumption and value creation. Contemporary consumers evaluate experiences not only based on functional benefits but also on emotional and symbolic dimensions. This aligns with the concept of customer perceived value, which encompasses the integration of functional quality, emotional satisfaction, and symbolic meaning in shaping consumer behavior. When culinary offerings are embedded with cultural narratives and philosophical significance, they have the potential to transform routine consumption into meaningful experiences that foster emotional attachment and cultural appreciation. Such experiences can enhance customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, and encourage repeat visitation, ultimately contributing to long-term business performance. However, empirical investigations into how these processes operate within the hospitality sector particularly in relation to traditional cuisine remain relatively scarce.

Moreover, the strategic integration of cultural gastronomy is increasingly relevant in the context of sustainable tourism development. Global tourism trends indicate a growing demand for authenticity, cultural preservation, and community-based experiences. By incorporating traditional culinary practices into hotel services, hospitality providers can simultaneously create economic value and support the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. This dual function positions gastronomy as a bridge between economic objectives and socio-cultural sustainability. Yet, the challenge lies in translating cultural values into marketable experiences without reducing them to superficial or commodified representations. This tension highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how gastronomic values can be operationalized within commercial settings while maintaining their authenticity and integrity. In light of these considerations, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining how the gastronomic values of traditional Chinese, Dayak, and Malay (Tidayu) cuisine can be explored and strategically integrated into hotel culinary services. The study is grounded in the premise that food is not merely a consumable product but a multidimensional construct that encompasses cultural, symbolic, and economic dimensions. By bridging cultural theory and hospitality management, this research seeks to contribute to a more holistic understanding of value creation in the hospitality industry. The primary aim of this study is to explore the gastronomic values embedded in traditional Tidayu cuisine and to analyze their role in enhancing culinary experiences and hotel profitability in Pontianak City. To achieve this aim, the study is guided by the following objectives: (1) to identify and interpret the philosophical and cultural values inherent in traditional Tidayu cuisine; (2) to examine how these values are represented and implemented within the culinary practices of star-rated hotels; and (3) to analyze their contribution to customer experience, perceived value, and business performance within the hospitality context.

By addressing these objectives, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances the discourse on gastronomy by integrating perspectives from anthropology, tourism studies, and marketing to conceptualize food as a source of experiential and symbolic value. Practically, it provides insights for hospitality practitioners on how to leverage local culinary heritage as a strategic asset for differentiation and competitive advantage. Ultimately, this research underscores the potential of culturally grounded gastronomy to create meaningful experiences, enhance customer engagement, and support sustainable economic development within the hospitality industry.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative exploratory design to examine the gastronomic values embedded in traditional Chinese, Dayak, and Malay (Tidayu) cuisine and their application within hotel culinary services. The research was conducted in Pontianak City, Indonesia, with a focus on star-rated hotels as key sites for formal food and beverage operations. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including hotel managers, chefs, food and beverage staff, and guests with relevant experience of local cuisine. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations in dining and kitchen settings, and analysis of supporting documents such as menus and promotional materials.

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic approach, where recurring patterns and key ideas were identified, grouped, and interpreted to understand the relationship between cultural values, culinary experiences, and business outcomes. To support the analysis process, qualitative data management software was used to organize and code the data systematically.



To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied triangulation by combining multiple data sources, along with participant validation and careful documentation of the research process. Ethical considerations were also observed by ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation throughout the study.

## RESULTS

The findings of this study are presented based on the patterns that emerged from the data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results describe how gastronomic values are reflected and applied in hotel culinary practices without further interpretation.

The study found that traditional Tidayu cuisine contains a number of core philosophical values that are consistently recognized by participants. These include harmony in the balance of flavors and ingredients, togetherness reflected in shared dining practices, spirituality linked to certain traditional dishes, and ecological awareness through the use of local and natural resources. These values are evident in various aspects of food preparation, from the selection of ingredients to cooking techniques and presentation. In hotel settings, the way these cultural values are incorporated into culinary services varies. Some hotels actively include traditional dishes in their menus and attempt to present them in ways that highlight their cultural background. In other cases, local cuisine appears only as a complementary offering and is not fully integrated into the main dining concept. Supporting materials such as menus and promotional content show that traditional dishes are often positioned as special items rather than core products.

Guest responses indicate that the presence of traditional cuisine contributes to a more engaging dining experience. Participants describe their experience not only in terms of taste, but also in terms of cultural exposure and emotional connection. This is particularly noticeable when guests receive additional information about the origin or meaning of the dishes they consume. From the perspective of hotel management and staff, the inclusion of traditional culinary elements is associated with increased guest interest and positive feedback. Some participants also noted indications of repeat visits and stronger customer engagement when culturally meaningful food offerings are available.

Overall, the findings show that gastronomic values are present and observable in traditional Tidayu cuisine, that their application in hotels varies, and that their presence contributes to a more meaningful culinary experience for guests.

**Table 1. Dimensions of Culinary Experience Reported by Guests**

Experience Dimension	Description Reported by Participants
Sensory	Taste, aroma, and visual presentation
Emotional	Feelings of enjoyment and connection
Cultural	Learning about local traditions
Social	Shared dining and interaction

## DISCUSSION

This study provides empirical insight into how gastronomic values embedded in traditional Tidayu cuisine are articulated within hotel culinary practices and how these values contribute to experiential and economic dimensions of hospitality. The findings reinforce the view that food operates not merely as a consumable product but as a culturally embedded system of meaning, aligning with anthropological perspectives that position cuisine as a medium through which social values and identities are constructed and communicated. In this context, the identification of values such as harmony, togetherness, spirituality, and ecological awareness reflects the symbolic depth of Tidayu gastronomy and its potential to function as a cultural resource within commercial hospitality settings.

From an experiential perspective, the findings extend the notion of experience-based consumption by demonstrating that culinary experiences are significantly enriched when cultural narratives and philosophical meanings are integrated into service delivery. This supports the argument advanced by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore that value creation increasingly depends on the staging of memorable experiences. However, this study adds nuance by showing that not all experiences are equally impactful; rather, experiences grounded in authentic cultural values tend to generate deeper emotional engagement and meaning for consumers. This suggests that the experiential value of gastronomy is not solely derived from sensory attributes, but from its capacity to connect individuals with cultural identity and collective memory. At the same time, the findings reveal a critical gap between the potential



and the actual implementation of culturally embedded gastronomy within hotel contexts. While some establishments demonstrate efforts to incorporate traditional cuisine, the overall integration remains partial and inconsistent. Traditional dishes are often positioned as supplementary offerings rather than as central components of the culinary strategy. This reflects a broader tension within the hospitality industry between standardization and localization. On one hand, standardized menus ensure operational efficiency and consistency; on the other, they may limit opportunities for differentiation and cultural expression. The underutilization of Tidayu gastronomy in star-rated hotels suggests that local culinary heritage has not yet been fully recognized as a strategic asset. From a value creation perspective, the study highlights that the integration of gastronomic values contributes to multiple dimensions of customer perceived value, including functional, emotional, and symbolic aspects. This aligns with contemporary marketing perspectives that emphasize the multidimensional nature of value. Importantly, the findings indicate that symbolic and cultural dimensions play a significant role in shaping customer experiences, particularly in tourism contexts where authenticity and uniqueness are highly valued. The positive responses from guests, including increased engagement and interest, suggest that culturally grounded culinary offerings can enhance satisfaction and foster loyalty.

The translation of cultural gastronomy into economic outcomes should be approached critically. While the study identifies indications of increased customer engagement and repeat visitation, the relationship between cultural integration and profitability is not linear or automatic. The commodification of culture within hospitality settings raises important questions regarding authenticity and representation. There is a risk that cultural elements may be simplified or selectively presented to meet market expectations, potentially leading to the erosion of their original meaning. Therefore, the challenge for hospitality practitioners lies in balancing commercial objectives with cultural integrity, ensuring that the integration of traditional cuisine remains respectful and meaningful rather than superficial. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the discourse on sustainable tourism by illustrating how gastronomy can serve as a bridge between economic development and cultural preservation. The incorporation of traditional Tidayu cuisine into hotel services not only enhances the tourist experience but also supports the continuity of local knowledge and practices. This aligns with broader sustainability frameworks that advocate for the protection of intangible cultural heritage as part of tourism development. Nevertheless, achieving this balance requires deliberate strategies, including collaboration with local communities, continuous knowledge transfer, and sensitivity to cultural contexts. In theoretical terms, this study advances the literature by integrating perspectives from gastronomy, experiential consumption, and hospitality management. It demonstrates that gastronomic values can be conceptualized as intangible assets that contribute to both experiential differentiation and competitive advantage. By linking cultural meaning with market value, the study provides a more holistic understanding of how food can function as a driver of both symbolic and economic outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusions

Concludes that This study demonstrates that traditional Tidayu cuisine embodies distinct gastronomic values such as harmony, togetherness, spirituality, and ecological awareness that are reflected in ingredients, preparation, and presentation practices. The findings show that these values are present but unevenly integrated within hotel culinary services, with some establishments incorporating them more explicitly than others. The results also indicate that the inclusion of culturally grounded culinary elements contributes to a more engaging and meaningful dining experience for guests, extending beyond sensory enjoyment to cultural and emotional dimensions. In addition, the presence of traditional cuisine is associated with increased guest interest, positive responses, and indications of repeat visits.

Overall, this study contributes by highlighting the role of gastronomic values as a cultural resource that can enhance culinary experience and support value creation within the hospitality context. It underscores the importance of integrating local culinary heritage into hotel services as a means of strengthening experiential offerings while maintaining cultural relevance.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, several practical and academic recommendations can be proposed. Hotels are encouraged to place greater emphasis on integrating traditional Tidayu cuisine into their core culinary offerings, rather than presenting it only as an additional or seasonal menu. By doing so, local cuisine can become a defining element of the hotel's identity and guest experience. It is also important for hotels to work closely with local communities and cultural practitioners to ensure that traditional dishes are presented in an authentic and meaningful way. Such collaboration can help preserve cultural values while maintaining



their relevance in a modern hospitality setting. In addition, enhancing the knowledge and awareness of chefs and service staff regarding the cultural significance of the dishes they serve can improve the overall quality of interaction with guests. When staff are able to convey the story and meaning behind the food, the dining experience becomes more engaging and memorable.

From a business perspective, incorporating traditional gastronomy into branding and marketing strategies may strengthen the hotel's positioning in a competitive market. Highlighting cultural authenticity can attract guests who are seeking unique and experience-based travel. For future studies, further research could focus on examining the relationship between cultural gastronomy and measurable business outcomes using different approaches or settings. Expanding the scope to other regions or types of hospitality services may also provide a broader understanding of this topic.

## FURTHER STUDY

Future research is encouraged to build on the findings of this study by exploring the role of gastronomic values in different hospitality and tourism contexts. Comparative studies across regions or cultural settings would be valuable in understanding how local culinary heritage is interpreted and integrated in diverse environments. Further investigation could also examine the relationship between culturally embedded culinary experiences and measurable business outcomes, such as customer retention, revenue growth, and brand positioning, using mixed-method or quantitative approaches. This would help strengthen the empirical linkage between cultural value integration and economic performance. In addition, future studies may focus on the perspectives of different stakeholders, including local communities, policymakers, and tourism developers, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional gastronomy can be sustained and developed within modern hospitality systems. Finally, research that explores innovation in presenting traditional cuisine such as through digital storytelling, experiential dining concepts, or sustainable culinary practices could offer new insights into how cultural authenticity can be preserved while adapting to contemporary market demands.

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