

Intercultural communication and innovation in women's empowerment within the Madurese gastronomy industry

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is pivotal in fostering innovation for women's empowerment, particularly within the traditional culinary industry deeply rooted in local cultural values. This qualitative study investigates how Madura women entrepreneurs utilize intercultural communication competencies to innovate their products and marketing strategies for Madura's signature cuisine. Through in-depth interviews and participatory observation with womenpreneurs and customers from diverse cultural backgrounds, the findings reveal that womenpreneurs' ability to understand and adapt to cultural differences significantly expands their market reach. Innovations include flavor adaptations tailored to international consumers' preferences, product packaging reflecting Madura's cultural values, and marketing narratives based on local cultural storytelling. The study also highlights that cross-cultural collaborations, both locally and internationally, are key factors in promoting Madura's culinary heritage to global markets. The implications suggest that empowering women through intercultural communication training not only strengthens local cultural identity but also enhances the economic sustainability of local communities, offering new insights into intercultural communication as an instrument of innovation in women's empowerment and traditional culinary branding, alongside a practical framework for culturally-based policy development.

Keywords

Intercultural communication, Innovation, Women's empowerment, Madurese culinary, Madurese gastronomy

Introduction

Data shows that women are the majority of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs said that about 60% of MSME actors are women, and the culinary sector is the largest among them [1]. In addition, Madura is known for a variety of typical culinary delights, such as Madura

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satay, kokot broth, and sinjay duck, soto campoor, chakee which has become a national culinary icon. Madura gastronomy also involves strong local traditions, making it a unique form of cultural communication. In the midst of the dynamics of globalization, the culinary industry functions as a cultural representation and a medium of intercultural communication, especially in areas with unique culinary cultures, such as Madura. As a major player in the industry, Madurese women face the challenge of maintaining tradition while adapting to contemporary innovations to meet the needs of an increasingly competitive market.

In this case, women's empowerment includes improving economic skills and cross-cultural communication skills. Intercultural communication is very important to expand the marketing network and increase the competitiveness of Madura culinary products in the domestic and international markets. However, women often face challenges to maximize their role in the industry because they do not have access to social, educational, and technological capital. Based on this background, the problems in this study are (1) how does intercultural communication help Madurese women work in the gastronomic industry? (2) What kind of innovations can support the empowerment of Madurese women in maintaining customs and increasing local culinary competitiveness? (3) How does Madura women's social capital help communication and innovation in the culinary field?

Intercultural communication has a strategic role in empowering Madurese women in the gastronomic industry. In cross-cultural interactions, Madurese women use local cultural elements such as language, folklore, and culinary symbols as communication tools to promote their products. For example, soto campoor, a staple broth is not only sold as a product, but is also positioned as an authentic cultural experience. Innovation is an important factor in strengthening the position of Madura women in the market. These innovations include the use of digital technology for marketing, such as social media and e-commerce platforms, as well as product packaging that is more attractive to consumers across cultures. This initiative requires continuous training to improve the digital literacy of Madura women. Social capital, such as trust, community networks, and social norms, plays a significant role in supporting cross-cultural communication. Social capital helps women build connections with consumers from different cultural backgrounds and expand collaboration opportunities with national and international business partners. In this context, the concept of cross-cultural communication theory [2] by Gudykunst & Kim is relevant to understand cross-cultural interactions and dynamics, as well as the gastronomic potential of Madura.

The purpose of the research is to understand the role of cross-cultural communication in encouraging innovation in women's empowerment, especially in the traditional Madura gastronomic industry. More specifically, this research seeks to: Recognizing the function of intercultural communication How women entrepreneurs in Madura are using their ability to communicate across cultural boundaries to develop innovative Madurese food items and marketing techniques. This include modifying culinary

preferences for global markets, employing cultural narratives in advertising, and creating novel product packaging that honors regional cultural norms. Investigating cultural and social ties: This study investigates the ways in which Madurese women's cultural relationships with customers from diverse ethnic backgrounds can broaden their market reach. Cross-cultural partnerships are one way to enhance Madura's culinary legacy in the international marketplace. Examining advancements in the empowerment of women: investigating the kinds of inventions that can help Madurese women preserve regional culinary customs while boosting the competitiveness of culinary goods on both the local and global markets. Increasing digital literacy, using digital technology for marketing, and providing women with continuous training are some examples of these ideas. Emphasizing the function of social capital examining the ways in which social capital—community networks, viewpoints, and social norms—can foster intercultural dialogue and open doors for local and global commercial cooperation.

Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative methodology with the goal of thoroughly examining the ways in which innovation and cross-cultural communication might empower women in the traditional Madura culinary sector. This approach was selected to describe cross-cultural interactions in the context of women's empowerment and to comprehend intricate social and cultural phenomena. Four primary techniques were used to collect data for this study: document analysis, focus group discussions (FGD), interviews, and participatory observations. This study makes use of a number of unique tools that were created based on pertinent ideas to guarantee that the data collection procedure is thorough and methodical. Initially, interview guides are made to assist researchers in guiding discussions and delving further into informant data. The theory of empowerment by Page & Czuba [3] and the philosophy of cross-cultural communication by Gudykunst & Kim [4] served as the foundation for the development of this handbook. Open-ended interview questions covering key subjects including cultural adaptability in marketing, innovation methods for Madura culinary items, and the use of digital technologies to broaden marketing reach are part of this strategy. (Kvale & Brinkmann, *Interviews: Mastering the Art of Interviewing for Qualitative Research*, 2009). Second, patterns of cross-cultural interaction, such as the use of language, gestures, and symbols, as well as innovations employed in marketing and production, were documented using a participatory observation checklist. Goffman's [5] theory of social interaction and the idea of cultural symbols in cross-cultural communication were consulted in the creation of this checklist. As outlined by Spradley [6] in *Participant Observation*, researchers can use this tool to methodically capture any pertinent interactions or cultural elements. Third, interviews and observations are meticulously documented using audio and video recordings. These recordings enable in-depth examination of nonverbal communication elements including body language and facial expressions, and they are highly beneficial in the data transcription process. This

tool offers the chance to examine the data in greater detail, particularly when it comes to comprehending the subtleties of cross-cultural communication. In their study on interview transcription, Halcomb & Davidson [7] go into additional detail about the usage of recordings as a tool.

Another significant source of data for this study is secondary documents. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) report on women's contribution to the MSME sector and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's report on culinary tourism promotion strategies provided information on local policies that promote women's empowerment and the advancement of gastronomic culture. These documents offer further background information to comprehend current regulations and how they affect Madurese women's empowerment. A multifaceted strategy using a range of instruments is intended to guarantee that the information gathered is not only accurate and pertinent, but also able to offer a comprehensive and detailed view of the connection between women's empowerment, innovation, and cross-cultural communication in Madurese traditional culinary sector.

The primary tool for organizing and breaking down data from policy texts, observation notes, and interviews into distinct themes is NVivo 12. Additionally, the software enables auto-coding according to particular keywords, such "digital technology," "cross-cultural communication," and "product innovation." Researchers can quickly find important themes and patterns in the data with this capability. Transcripts of interviews and observational data are uploaded into the software to start the data analysis process. Subsequently, the coding procedure is used to classify the data according to the primary themes that are pertinent to the study [8].

Result and Discussion

Intercultural communication and business gastronomy

With the rapid pace of development of transportation and information technology, it is possible for people in various parts of the world to know and relate to each other. According to Utami [9] based on a review of the literature on culinary, there is evidence of a cross-cultural communication process, in accordance with the influence of globalization. This process is a dialogue between the cultural identity of the community and the emergence of a multicultural identity. The spread of culture occurs through communication between cultures that is increasingly widespread, making certain cultures then universalized and even applied in aspects of life

. Anna Meigs points out that culinary is the result of a cultural construct that explores how food and eating are understood as tools that bring together diverse organisms, both physiological and mystical, in a single life [9]. Gastronomy reflects the cultural identity of a society. In a cross-cultural context, food becomes a medium to introduce cultural values, norms, and heritage. Cross-cultural communication is important to promote gastronomy to audiences who have different cultural backgrounds. Culinary is

a cultural element of a nation that is very easily recognized as the identity of a society. Culinary is one of the elements of culture and shows the existence of social relationships [10].

Indonesian and Madurese culinary has a very wide spectrum, with a stretch of islands and has a strategic location for the realization of intercultural dialogue, and most importantly has biological wealth that can be transformed into foodstuffs. Indonesian cuisine, including Madura, is slowly starting to go global because it has diverse and unique flavors.

Women in gastronomy business

Cooking activities in traditional kitchens are often attached to women's roles and are interpreted as obligations as well as a form of sincere service to families, couples, children, and even other people in the environment of women's lives. Septiani (2022) explained that women are central figures in traditional kitchens, places where culinary expertise, family values, and local culture are linked. Cooking is not only seen as a routine task, but also as a form of women's devotion to the people around them [10].

The kitchen is a stage where women express affection, care, and care through carefully prepared dishes. Cooking skills are a form of service that goes beyond just functional activities, but also reflects women's identity and role in maintaining household and community harmony. The importance of cooking activities in traditional kitchens also reflects the role of women in preserving cultural heritage. Through the use of hereditary recipes and traditional cooking methods, women maintain the sustainability of family values and local wisdom. The kitchen becomes a place where traditions are transmitted, and culinary knowledge is passed down from generation to generation.

Although cooking in a traditional kitchen can be interpreted as an obligation, women often present it with pride and pleasure. In the cooking process, they can express creativity, innovation, and love through the dishes served. Thus, the traditional kitchen is not only a place to meet nutritional needs, but also a stage for women to express their identity and human values through the art of cooking. Cooking activities in traditional kitchens reflect the complexity of women's roles in the context of family and society. The kitchen is not only a place to process foodstuffs, but also a field of creativity, cultural heritage, and endless service of compassion. Most of the culinary tourism actors are women who not only play the role of breadwinners, but also play a dual role in social activities.

This understanding is reflected in the analysis revealed by Suteja, which highlights the three main reasons women are involved in the food production process [11]. First, many women are involved in culinary businesses because of the necessities of life. The culinary business is often considered a means that can meet the economic needs of families, considering that this sector has the potential to provide a stable income. In entering the culinary business, women are able to accommodate the economic needs of their families while maintaining the diversity of social roles and roles as housewives. Second,

limited skills are another reason for women to be involved in the culinary business. Cooking is often considered one of the skills traditionally associated with women's roles in everyday life. Therefore, for many women, entering the culinary business is a natural step because they have mastered this skill as part of their domestic role. The third reason that encourages women to enter the culinary business is to see the great opportunities that exist in the business.

The development of the culinary tourism industry and the trend of increasing public interest in culinary variations open the door to significant opportunities. Women who see the potential of this business as an opportunity to grow and expand their social network and utilize their cooking skills. The involvement of women in the culinary business is not only triggered by economic needs, but also by their skills and wideopen business opportunities. The role of women in the culinary world not only creates financial opportunities, but also becomes a manifestation of cultural sustainability and creativity in serving diverse and meaningful dishes

Madura and the variety of gastronomy potential

In the writing of Mulyaningsih et al. [12], there are at least five types of culinary, and typical dishes on the island of Madura based on the type of processing (Table 1), namely:

Table 1. Types of culinary and typical dishes on the island of Madura based on the type of processing

Type of Culinary	Location	Names of Food	Participant/ add-on
Soup	Bangkalan, Pamekasan and Sumenep	Soto, Rawon, Kaldu, Kaldu Kokot, Goat Curry, Goat Gule, Cow Gule, Green Bean Gule with goat meat mix	Rice/ lontong
Bebakaran/ grill	Bangkalan and Sampang	Chicken Satay, Meat Satay (Beef), Coconut Satay (Beef with coconut blanket), and Goat Satay. Sauces or spices are usually accompanied by spices, peanuts, onions, and sweet soy sauce. Another finding, sauce or satay seasoning using petis (processed shrimp, and fish) tastes salty, without peanuts	Lontong/ rice
Salad	Bangkalan, Sampang and Sumenep	Known as Rujak, it consists of vegetables such as Touge, Kale, Cucumber, Krai, Cabbage, and Boiled Long Beans. Fruits that are often used such as papaya, Young Mango (mouse) and Pineapple, sometimes Guava Mente or Guava, as well as beef (usually cingur or cecek), accompanied by Petisa sauce mixed with peanuts, and certain spices (bananas klutuk, fried garlic, salt, etc.)	Lontong and Rice (rarely))
Lalapan	Sampang and Bangkalan	chicken, and Fried Duck (given certain spices before frying), with the addition of dried fried coconut shavings, with a splash of spices/sauce (a mixture of used cooking oil of chicken/duck/onion with onion deposits, and Chicken/Duck fat), and chili sauce with young mango or without young mango. Black Duck Serpang, Topak Ladehe (soupy), Petis Egg, Campur Lorjuk (soupy) or Nasi campur (a combination of various toppings). Usually white rice is sprinkled with fried coconut, spiced white noodles, various meats (empal, lung, gizzard liver, etc.), eggs, shrimp, and chili sauce.	Nasi, atau Nasi campuran jagung
Campur	Bangkalan		Rice

Madurese women's empowerment and innovation in gastronomy business

Empowerment means giving power or strengthening to the community [13]. Empowerment has the purpose of helping to gain power in reducing social and personal barriers in making a decision [14]. On the other hand, empowerment carried out on a person or group of people will be able to generate confidence to achieve a hope [15]. One of the implementation of empowerment can be done by entrepreneurship [16]. According to Sun et al., entrepreneurship means actions taken to meet the needs of life by excelling in their abilities, expertise, and potential. These abilities are used to create something new with added value to generate profits and consumer satisfaction [17]. The role of women in the economic sector, especially in the field of traditional culinary, plays a very dominant and significant role. Febriana stated that traditional culinary produced by women is not only an economic supporting element, but also one of the main driving forces in shaping the image of a tourist area [18]. Women are often an asset to preserve traditional culinary heritage, preserve recipes from generation to generation and revive cooking traditions that have become an integral part of local culture. Women's expertise in producing traditional food is not only rooted in culinary skills, but also involves distinctive touches, stories, and cultural values that are passed down from generation to generation. Traditional culinary produced by women does not only provide food, but also creates an alluring sensory and aesthetic experience. The aromas, tastes, and presentations of traditional dishes often reflect the uniqueness and authenticity of the tourist area. The contribution of women in developing traditional culinary can directly shape the positive image and attractiveness of the area for tourists. Apart from being culinary producers, women are also often involved in promotional and marketing activities, both through their own small businesses and through collaborations with local governments or tourism agencies. With this dominant role, women are not only agents of local economic development, but also the main pillar in building and maintaining the cultural identity of a tourist destination. The role of women in the traditional culinary sector has a wide impact, not only economically but also in shaping the attractiveness and positive image of a tourist area. Efforts to recognize, support, and empower women in the sector can make a great positive contribution to the development and sustainability of tourism in a region

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2022, the role of women in the culinary industry sector is prominent, both as entrepreneurs and workers. Their involvement in the culinary business has had a significant positive impact on local economic growth, job creation, and income increase [19]. As entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs in Madura have succeeded in playing a central role in managing various culinary businesses, including food stalls, restaurants, and other culinary businesses. Their creativity in creating menus, managing operations, and marketing culinary products not only contributes to the development of the culinary industry itself, but also becomes a major driver of economic growth at the local level.

Apart from being entrepreneurs, women are also active as workers in various parts of the culinary industry, including kitchens, customer service, and management. Their skills in cooking, serving, and providing quality service add value to the culinary experience of consumers. Women are not only the main actors in managing the culinary business, but also the backbone in maintaining and improving the quality of products and services. The positive impact of women's involvement in the culinary industry can also be seen from the creation of new jobs that strengthen the local economic structure. The development of the culinary business not only creates job opportunities for women, but also for other levels of society, including youth and experienced workers.

In addition, the increase in income generated from this culinary activity has the potential to increase the purchasing power of local people, encouraging more inclusive economic growth. Women's involvement in the culinary industry sector not only creates sustainable businesses, but also brings a broad positive contribution to local economic development, job creation, and improving community welfare that recognizes and supports the role of women in the culinary industry is an important step in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth. In the culinary world, women culinary merchants not only serve food, but also become storytellers and guardians of the cultural wisdom contained behind every dish they offer

Page revealed that this approach creates a unique experience that is able to captivate tourists or visitors who come. Through each dish served, female culinary traders are able to convey stories about the origins, traditions, and cultural values reflected in each dish. For example, any recipe or cooking method can be a window into local history, family heritage, or traditional practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. By sharing these stories, they not only provide food, but also take visitors on an immersive cultural journey [20].

In this context, women culinary entrepreneurs in Madura can be a catalyst for innovation, positive change, and sustainable development in the tourism and culinary sectors. They can play a crucial role in shaping narratives, inspiring change, and leading projects that have a positive impact on society and the environment. The role of women in framing cultural tourism through healthy and sustainable culinary is very important. Women not only play a role as managers and entrepreneurs in the culinary sector, but also as preservationists of local culture, providers of healthy food, bearers of sustainability values, and catalysts in creating unique tourism experiences.

in the Preservation of Local Culture Women often play an important role in preserving traditional recipes and cooking methods typical of a region. They can introduce food that reflects the richness of Madura's local culture to tourists. By maintaining traditional culinary, women help maintain the authenticity and identity of Madura culture, providing an authentic experience to visitors. Most successful culinary businesses have a role of women behind it, and often use the name Perempuan as the brand of the stall/restaurant, such as Warung Nyah Lette The role of women can also provide a

unique experience and will not be forgotten by tourists, such as selling activities at the moment of “car free day” with a performance of concocting food in front of consumers.

This study has made an important addition to the development of theories in cross-cultural communication and innovation, particularly in terms of women’s empowerment in the local culinary industry. This study has theoretical implications such as enriching notions in cross-cultural communication theory, using innovation as an empowerment tool, and strengthening social capital theory. In the perspective of Gudykunst and Kim’s [21], Cross-Cultural Communication Theory, this study demonstrates how local cultural aspects such as symbolism, folklore, and traditional cuisine can serve as effective cross-cultural communication tools. This highlights the importance of cultural adaptation theory in product creation and marketing. Furthermore, this study offers a new dimension to cross-cultural communication by incorporating a gendered perspective. Madura women have an important role in bridging cultural gaps by telling the stories of culinary goods that incorporate local ingredients, as well as acting as change agents in the development of cross-border cultural understanding. This study also lends support to the idea that innovation can be used to empower people [3]. The study’s findings underline that innovation, in the form of digitization, product taste adaption, and branding based on local culture, is an essential component of female empowerment. Innovation here refers not just to the application of technology, but also to the optimization of social and cultural capital in order to provide considerable economic and social value. Thus, innovation is viewed as a link between local traditions and the demands of the global market. Furthermore, this research helps to reinforce Putnam’s Social Capital Theory.

According to the study, social capital such as community trust, local networks, and cultural norms are important in improving cross-cultural communication. Social capital is also a tool that empowers women to innovate and extend their business networks, both locally and internationally. Thus, this study contributes to our understanding of how social capital can be used as a strategic asset in women’s empowerment. The findings of this study have important practical implications for the creation of women’s empowerment programs and the management of the local culinary sector. One of the most significant ramifications is the necessity for digital literacy training for female entrepreneurs in Madura. This training will assist them in making the best use of digital platforms such as e-commerce and social media to market their products to a wider audience, including foreign markets. This digitalization is projected to make Madura culinary items more competitive on a worldwide basis. Furthermore, this research promotes the development of local culture-based branding. Local governments and MSME associations might collaborate to develop marketing narratives that highlight common Madura stories, such as local traditions and folklore. This narrative will not only pique the interest of global tourists, but it will also strengthen Madura’s cultural identity as a one-of-a-kind culinary destination.

In terms of community empowerment, this study suggests the establishment of community-based women's empowerment programs. Collaboration among governments, academia, and business players is required to design programs that provide access to entrepreneurship training, financial assistance, and business network building. This type of program is designed to boost women's economic independence and contribute to the growth of the local gastronomy sector.

Finally, the study's findings can be used to develop a plan for promoting gastronomy tourism among women. By designating female businesses as "cultural ambassadors," this advertising effort can highlight their involvement in preserving Madura's culinary characteristics, increasing tourist appeal. This method has the ability to increase tourist visits while also strengthening the local cultural identity in the global market. Thus, the theoretical and practical implications of this study provide a solid foundation for establishing strategies for women's creativity and empowerment in the gastronomy industry, as well as increasing the literature on cross-cultural communication and social capital. While this study contributes significantly to our understanding of the relationship between cross-cultural communication, innovation, and women's empowerment in the culinary business, various limitations must be considered in order to provide a more comprehensive context for the findings.

One of the primary constraints is the number of samples. The study only included 20 female entrepreneurs from Madura, which may not be fully indicative of the range of women's experiences in Indonesia's gastronomy business as a whole. This small sample size risks offering an unduly detailed view of Madura's local context, making it difficult to generalize results to other places. As a result, future research should include a bigger and more diverse number of individuals to ensure that the findings are more representative. Smith [22] underlined the necessity of sample size in qualitative research to guarantee that the findings are thorough and accurate. Furthermore, the focus of this research is solely on the cultural and gastronomic setting in Madura, which limits its geographical scope. Despite Madura's enormous cultural and gastronomic richness, the findings of this study cannot be easily transferred to other regions with distinct cultural traits. Comparative research incorporating various regions of Indonesia can provide a more comprehensive perspective, particularly in terms of understanding how local characteristics influence the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and innovation. According to Creswell [23], broadening the geographic scope of research can yield more generalist and contextual insights.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the strategic significance of female entrepreneurs in Madura's gastronomy industry, with an emphasis on economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and innovation. Women function as cultural stewards and change agents by combining traditional cooking techniques with current branding strategies. They use cross-cultural communication to effectively bring Madura's culinary legacy to new

consumers, integrating storytelling and local symbols. Innovation in digital literacy, creative packaging, and taste adaption has increased their global competitiveness. This approach not only promotes equitable economic growth but also has a positive social impact by improving local communities. Collaboration among stakeholders, supported by regulations and digital platforms, is crucial for the sector's long-term success.

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