Traditional Icon Culinary as Indonesia Gastro Brand

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Indonesia foods have been initiated and developed as nation brand. However, there is no specific food or beverage of Indonesia that became an icon of gastro brand although Indonesia decided to have 30 icons of traditional culinary as a part of soft diplomacy. This study surveyed the culinary icons at hotels that have restaurants which served breakfast for local and foreign guests who stayed at. As a guideline, this study constructs the working definition of gastro brand by elaborating previous concepts such as gastro, gastronomy and brand. In addition, this study used parallel mix-method to identify and confirm Indonesia gastro brand. This study found that fried rice could be identified as a main icon of Indonesia gastro brand based on its popularity and availability. The study also confirms previous research that fried rice is not only traditional, omnipresent and ubiquitous’ culinary but also as a part of nation brand.

Keywords: Indonesia Gastro Brand, Gastronomy, Fried Rice, Traditional Icon Culinary.

1. INTRODUCTION

Food is a vital element for life, history representation, tradition, and culture universally. Every human depends on food not only for surviving but also for self-convenience, communicating to other people, and relating to ancestor. Food also becomes one of important tools for states to define the existence of national identity of a certain citizen. As a result, food has become one of diplomacy tools known as culinary diplomacy. It is an instrument of peace making among culture in terms of enhancing the understanding of intercultural. It also enhance the interaction and cooperation called “gastro diplomacy” as one of tools for international relationship among states.

The term of culinary diplomacy or gastro diplomacy has been popular for public or cultural diplomacy. However, there is no specific study to construct gastronomy (food or beverage) as a brand. A study of comparing gastro diplomacy campaigns had been conducted but the study had only explored the finding as a part of subfield of public diplomacy.

Therefore, this study focuses on constructing food as a part of gastronomy as a brand which called “gastro-brand.” Gastronomy should not only develop on diplomacy or tourism since every states developed their nation brand to promote their country to be better.

Previous study about nation branding initiation of Indonesia found that food has been one of top of minds for nation brand. The study also confirms that food of Indonesia such as “nasi goreng” (fried rice), “rendang” (beef sauce), and instant noodle were well known among Indonesia foreigners including foreign government officers, expatriates, and tourists. Another study also supports that instead of promoting Indonesia based on six dimensions of Anholt’s hexagon nation branding, the study recommends that Indonesia should developed gastro-brand based on any local food and beverage.

The practice of introducing Indonesia gastronomy as brand had been initiated since 2008 by Indonesia Embassy at United States of America. The embassy developed “Restaurant Task Force” to promote Indonesia restaurants and to enhance better awareness toward Indonesian gastro. At this time, the introduction and promotion of Indonesia gastronomy were known as gastro diplomacy or culinary diplomacy which is a part of soft power diplomacy strategy. The effort to manage and promote Indonesia culinary as a part of gastronomic diplomacy had also been conducted by Indonesia embassy to Spain in cooperation with The Ministry of Tourism and Economic Creative and Intercontinental Madrid and Mid Plaza Indonesia. Moreover, at the event of Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN) II at Jakarta, the member of IDN developed the “Culinary Task Force.” The task force has a vision to globalize Indonesian culinary that would become one of main attraction for foreign tourist to visit Indonesia.

Since Indonesia gastronomy has been marketed socially and promotion and branding are important part of marketing tools which closely related each other, this study propose to develop Indonesia gastro branding. Moreover, Ministry of Tourism and Economic Creative Republic of Indonesia announced 30 icons of Indonesia traditional culinary (Ikon Kuliner Tradisional Indonesia/IKTI) as a part of icon for gastro tourism.

2. GASTRO-BRAND OR GASTRONOMIC BRAND: WHY IS SO IMPORTANT?

In term of developing the concept of gastro brand or gastronomic brand, this study constructs the term by combining the
In order to explore the working definition of gastro branding, this study used quantitative and qualitative approach (mix method). The quantitative approach refers to the idea of quantifiable program about the opening restaurants which have served culinary diplomacy. At the same time, Chapple-Sokol also raised several questions that need to be answered via qualitative approach. Therefore, this study focused on survey method which identified 90 hotels that serves breakfast and brunch (breakfast and lunch) in Jakarta, Indonesia. The hotels consisted on three categories: 30 hotel five stars, 30 hotels four stars, and 30 hotels three stars. Sample of purposive hotels come from two websites (agoda.com and tripadvisor.com) that provided recommendation and testimony on hotel and its restaurants. The samples were also compared with zomato.com which focused on analyzing the menu of restaurant. This study kept names of hotels confidentially since this study focused on its restaurant. There are three types of restaurant at hotels: (1) the restaurant is belonged to hotel; (2) the restaurant is managed by network and hotel only provides the space; (3) the restaurant is rented a space from hotel management.

This study observed the restaurants from the opening to the closing time (06.00–10.00 AM). During observation, the observers identified whether the restaurants provided Indonesia menu or food stand. If the restaurants provided Indonesia menu or food stand, the next step was to identify the location of food stand whether front, back, left or right side of restaurants. Then the observation came to the accessible or direction to the food stand.

The next step was to identify whether the restaurants provided all 30 IKTIs or only some of them from the menu or food stand. The chef, supervisor, or banquet manager from each restaurants were asked about the reason of menu’s choice. At the same time, the observers asked and made a list of menu which provided more options from 30 IKTIs. The observers also asked the favorite menu which come from 30 IKTIs. The questions about favorite menu were confirmed to guests of restaurant.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Restaurants at the hotels consisted of three types: restaurants is belonged to hotel (57.9%); the restaurant is managed by network and hotel provides the space (28.9%); and the restaurant is rented a space from hotel management (13.2%). Restaurants belong to hotels are mostly owned by three star hotels (45.5%). While 50% of five star hotels consider the specific restaurant to rent their space although 40% of them also have their own restaurants. It indicates that food and beverage sales at the hotels is one of the income for hotels. Moreover, hotels provide breakfast to attract their guest staying longer with them.

The observed restaurants show that the location is not only accessible for hotel guests but also for potential consumers who are not staying at the hotels. Most of the restaurants (85%) are located at the first floor or close to entrance and hotel lobby. The front door persons, security persons, and receptionists at the lobby are the key persons to show the location of restaurants with good directions. They are able to say the name of restaurants correctly.

All of observed restaurants provide porridge as a requirement food. Most of the observed restaurants (78.9%) have Indonesia...
food as main and favorite menu, while others have eastern food such as from China (10.5%) and western food (10.5%). Oxtail soup (sop buntut) is the main and favorite food for 41.9% of restaurants, while fried rice (nasi goreng) is provided by 38.7% of restaurants as main and favorite food.

Moreover, fried rice is not only as one of main and favorite food but also as an Indonesia popular food at many observed restaurants (51.6%). Several restaurants give a specific name for it such as, “nasi goreng China,” “nasi goreng Hermitage,” “nasi goreng Seafood,” “nasi goreng Syailendra,” “nasi goreng Bali,” and “nasi goreng kampung.” The name of fried rice based on country of origin (“nasi goreng Cina”), place (“nasi goreng Hermitage,” “nasi goreng Bali”) or street (“nasi goreng Syailendra”), and ingredient (“nasi goreng seafood” and “nasi goreng kampung”). Fried rice is also breakfast food that should be added by chefs or restaurants more than three times (35.5%) than other foods. The decision of choosing menu including adding more food such as fried rice is made mostly by chefs (88.3%). However, the consideration or suggestion of menu based on management (43.5%) and consumers (32.25%) not by chef community (6.47%). In addition, fried rice is also ordered as first choice food by consumers for lunch and dinner (38.7%).

Although fried rice is a part of Indonesia traditional culinary icon (IKTI), most of restaurants (55.3%) do not know about it. IKTI has been never considered to implement it by the majority of restaurant (71.1%). It shows that Indonesia traditional culinary icon was not socialized among Indonesia restaurants well. Of 30 IKTI, only 15 menus are provided by majority of restaurants (76.3%). The restaurants provide the menu not only based on IKTI but they are considering of menu based on common sense of chefs and their community, managements, and consumers.

Fried rice has a special place in many restaurants. Moreover, the president of United States of America, Barack Obama, has mentioned it explicitly when he had interviewed and homecoming visited to Indonesia.29 He had also ordered specially the fried rice from restaurant in Bali. He spoke Indonesia directly to order fried rice from restaurant in Bali. He spoke Indonesia directly to order fried rice from restaurant in Bali. He spoke Indonesia directly to order fried rice from restaurant in Bali. Obama directly to order four portions of fried rice and paid it with credit card. Then the fried rice was delivered via Air Force C-17 for 13 hours.29 Former President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, had also mentioned that he had special ordered the fried rice to Barack Obama after he got a protest on 2011 East Asia Summit in Bali.31

Beside its popularity, according to chefs, the ingredient of fried rice is available both in traditional market or modern marketplace such as egg, onion, garlic, vegetable oil or margarine, and soy sauce or ketchup. Therefore, fried rice could be found in any restaurant at hotels, small and medium restaurants, and street vendors. Unfortunately, most of the observed restaurants (47.4%) put the Indonesian food stand including fried rice at the back. Several guests said they are difficult to find the food stand. According to chef and staff of food and beverage services, menu of Indonesia food is an obligation for their restaurant, however, the location and display of food stand are not their responsibility but management’s decision. According to management, the location and display of food stand are based on consumer demand. Three different perspectives about the location and display of food stand could be occurred while no specific measurement and standard about the importance of IKTI in the observed restaurant.

This study found that special and traditional food such as fried rice which mainly consumed by popular people could be an icon for national culinary. However, the food should be constructed well from preparation to consumption steps. The construction on food preparation should be focused on the choosing of original or local ingredient. Moreover the ingredient would be a part of the indigenous wisdom of food.

Since the steps of food service have long journey, the terminology of gastro could be more suitable for developing a brand especially nation brand. As a part of building nation branding, food is already recognized as part of cultural element6 and soft diplomacy strategy.6,15,29 Moreover, other countries such as France, Italia, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, Malaysia concern to develop their food as a robust and distinctive culinary culture.29 Moreover, gastro brand would be as non-logocentric form of communication6 in nation brand.

5. CONCLUSIONS
The fried rice could be a part of Indonesia gastro brand since its popularity and availability. The processing, tasting, and experiencing of fried rice were explored through quantitative and qualitative approach in this study. Therefore, the next study should be focused on experiment approach of Indonesia gastro especially fried rice taste on local and foreign people. Furthermore, the next study could be focused on discovering the different recipes of fried rice from different originality, place, or ingredient as a part of gastro branding.

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