

The Innovation of Traditional Dayak Culinary Products as a Strategy to Strengthen the Creative Economy in West Kotawaringin Regency

Normand Armando Lampe¹, Grace Evelina Buji², Kembara Sopather³

¹Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Palangka Raya

²Economics Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Palangka Raya

³Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Palangka Raya

Email : normand.armando@feb.upr.ac.id

ARTICLE HISTORY	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: January 18th, 2025 Revised: February 12th, 2025 Accepted: March 3rd, 2025</p> <p>Keywords : Creative Economy Culinary Innovation Economic Strategy</p>	<p><i>Innovation in traditional culinary tourism products plays a crucial role in strengthening the creative economy in Kotawaringin Barat Regency. Traditional cuisine not only reflects local cultural identity but also has the potential to become a tourist attraction that enhances community welfare. The development of the creative economy through culinary innovation encompasses aspects such as presentation, packaging, and digital marketing strategies. However, innovation in this sector still faces various challenges, including limited access to technology, capital constraints, and the dilemma of preserving authenticity while adapting to market trends. Strategic efforts such as training, digital technology utilization, and collaboration with art communities serve as potential solutions. Research findings indicate that appropriate innovation can enhance the competitiveness of traditional cuisine and drive local economic growth. Therefore, a sustainable and collaborative approach is needed to ensure that traditional culinary innovation becomes a driving force for the creative economy in the region.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Traditional culinary tourism is one of the important elements in the development of the creative economy, especially in the culinary sector. The creative economy is a sector that utilizes individual creativity, skills, and talents to produce economically valuable products or services. In the Indonesian context, this sector includes industries such as art, design, music, culinary arts, and information and communication technology. The creative economy in Indonesia is believed to make a significant contribution to national economic growth because, in addition to creating new jobs, this sector can also increase Indonesia's competitiveness on the global stage (Prasetyo, 2019).

Based on the 2024 Creative Industry diagram data, it can be seen that the creative industry, or creative economy, contributes 11%, indicating a positive influence on the Indonesian economy. Thus, it can be said that the creative industry can boost Indonesia's economic growth (H Budiana, 2024).

Traditional cuisine not only represents local cultural identity but also serves as a source of inspiration for creating innovative products with high added value. Indonesian traditional culinary tourism has deep historical roots, stemming from local wisdom that utilizes abundant natural resources of the archipelago, such as spices, rice, and seafood. Over time, this cuisine was influenced by interactions with foreign cultures, especially through global trade routes from

the 7th to the 15th centuries, which brought influences from India, China, Arab, and Europe, as well as during the Dutch colonial period that introduced new cooking techniques and dishes. Post-independence, traditional cuisine became a symbol of cultural identity promoted through food festivals, traditional markets, and modern restaurants. A variety of dishes like Rendang from Sumatra, Gudeg from Java, and Papeda from Papua have become culinary tourism attractions reflecting the cultural richness of each region.

Modern culinary tourism trends, driven by social media, also extend the reach of traditional cuisine to an international level. In this era of globalization, the development of traditional culinary products through a creative approach is a strategic step to increase tourist appeal while strengthening the local economy. Therefore, innovation in traditional culinary products is an integral part of efforts to advance a sustainable creative economy.

In the context of the creative economy, innovation in traditional culinary products plays a role in creating new opportunities for local businesses to enhance their competitiveness. This innovation process involves transforming culinary presentation into an experience that blends art, technology, and culture. For instance, innovations in packaging, digital marketing techniques, or combinations with artistic elements can increase product appeal to modern consumers. Furthermore, this development also positively impacts the empowerment of local communities and job creation. Thus, innovation in traditional culinary tourism products not only supports cultural sustainability but also acts as a driving force for creative economic growth.

Innovation in Dayak traditional culinary products in Kotawaringin Barat (Kobar) Regency in Central Kalimantan Province is an important strategy for strengthening the regional creative economy. According to data from the Kobar Tourism Office, the development of the Kotawaringin Barat Creative Economy Information System (SI EKA) application in 2023 aims to make it easier for the community to discover the creative economic potential in Kobar, including in the culinary sector.

This aligns with Florida's (2002) opinion, which states that the creative economy plays a significant role in driving local economic growth through innovation and creativity. One example of culinary innovation in Kobar is Siti Fatimah's processing of Dayak onions into herbal candies in 2020. This product not only offers a unique taste but also health benefits, such as preventing diabetes and lowering cholesterol levels. This type of innovation demonstrates how creativity can increase the added value of local products. According to Howkins (2001), creativity is the main economic resource in the creative economy, which can increase product competitiveness in the market.

The Menghampar Wadai Festival held in Kobar in 2023 is another effort to preserve and promote traditional culinary richness. This festival showcases 58 types of *wadai* or traditional snacks that are rarely found, such as *Wadai Putu* and *Bubur Jawau Rengas* (Dayak News, 2023). Such activities can increase public appreciation for traditional cuisine and encourage the development of new products. According to Richards (2002), cultural festivals can be effective tools in tourism and creative economy development.

A phenomenon observed among traditional culinary tourism business actors is the lack of innovation in traditional culinary products. Many traditional culinary products are still served conventionally without development or adaptation to modern consumer preferences. This leads to a decline in the appeal of traditional cuisine amidst competition from international culinary products or modern food innovations.

Innovation efforts often face a dilemma between meeting modern market demands and maintaining the authentic taste and cultural value of traditional culinary products. Too

significant a change can erase the traditional identity that is the main attraction of the cuisine. Furthermore, many businesses in the traditional culinary sector have not yet realized the great potential of developing their products within the context of the creative economy. Consequently, innovation is often sporadic and lacks a long-term strategy, thus failing to deliver maximum economic impact. Therefore, this phenomenon highlights the need for a strategic approach to developing traditional culinary tourism product innovations to compete in the global market, support cultural preservation, and contribute to creative economic growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Economy

The creative economy is an economic concept that focuses on creativity, innovation and cultural values as the main sources of competitiveness and economic growth. According to Howkins (2001), the creative economy involves the process of transforming ideas into products or services that have economic value. In the culinary context, the creative economy provides a great opportunity to develop traditional products through innovative approaches that strengthen local cultural values while increasing competitiveness in the global market.

Florida (2002) also emphasized that the creative economy can be the main driving force for local economic growth through the creation of added value based on creativity. In this case, traditional culinary delights can be processed into superior products that not only reflect cultural identity, but are also able to meet the tastes of the modern market. Therefore, developing traditional culinary delights through innovation is a strategic step to strengthen the creative economy sector.

The creative economy is an economic sector that relies on creativity and innovation in producing products and services with high added value. According to Hartley et al. (2013), the creative economy does not only include the cultural and arts industry, but also involves various fields such as digital technology, media, and creativity-based entrepreneurship. This sector is considered an unlimited economic resource because it is driven by ideas and human talent that continues to develop. Therefore, the creative economy is one of the main strategies in increasing a country's competitiveness in the era of globalization.

Several experts emphasize that developing the creative economy requires collaboration between various sectors, including government, academia and industry. Caves (2000) in his theory regarding the creative industry explains that this sector has special characteristics, such as demand uncertainty, dependence on individual talent, and a project-based production process. In addition, Throsby (2001) emphasized that the creative economy has economic value as well as cultural value, so policies that support this sector must consider both aspects. Thus, the success of the creative economy depends on an ecosystem that supports innovation, freedom of expression, and infrastructure that enables sustainable growth of the creative industry.

Produk Innovation

Product innovation is a process of developing and implementing new ideas in creating or perfecting goods or services so that they are more effective and in line with market needs. According to Schumpeter (1934), innovation includes five main aspects, namely the introduction

of new products, new production methods, new markets, new sources of raw materials, and more efficient industrial organization. This innovation plays an important role in increasing the company's competitiveness and providing added value for consumers. Therefore, companies that are able to innovate continuously have greater opportunities to survive and develop amidst global competition.

Experts also emphasize that product innovation must be supported by systematic research and development as well as a deep understanding of customer needs. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), successful innovation depends not only on technology, but also on the right marketing strategy so that the product can be accepted by the market. In addition, Christensen (1997) in his theory of disruptive innovation states that truly revolutionary innovation can change the industrial structure and replace old technology. Thus, product innovation is not just about creating something new, but must also be able to provide better and more relevant solutions for users.

Innovation is the key to success in developing traditional culinary products that can compete in the global market. Schumpeter (1934) defined innovation as the process of creating something new, whether in the form of a product, production method, market, or organization. In a culinary context, innovation includes changes to recipes, serving techniques, packaging, and marketing strategies that combine technology and culture.

According to Sundbo (2009), innovation in the tourism sector, including culinary tourism, must be directed at creating new, unique experiences for consumers. Examples are the combination of culinary arts with visual arts, cultural festivals, or the use of digital technology to promote products. This kind of innovation not only increases the attractiveness of the product, but also opens up new opportunities to increase the income of local businesses.

Traditional Culinary

Traditional culinary is a cultural heritage that reflects the history, traditions and local wisdom of a society. According to Long (2004), traditional food functions as a medium to convey the cultural identity of a community to the outside world. In Indonesia, traditional culinary delights developed through interaction with foreign cultures, such as Indian, Chinese, Arabic and European, which enriched local flavors and cooking techniques. However, this culinary delights still maintain local uniqueness as the main attraction. Ragheb (1996) revealed that tradition-based culinary tourism has the potential to increase tourist interest, especially when the food is served as part of an authentic cultural experience. Thus, preserving and innovating traditional culinary delights is an important step to ensure the continuity of cultural values amidst modernization.

The Role of Cultural Festivals in Supporting Traditional Culinary Development

Cultural festivals are an effective tool for promoting traditional culinary delights and encouraging innovation. Richards (2002) explains that cultural festivals are able to increase public awareness of cultural heritage as well as create new economic opportunities for local business actors. The Wadai Memampar Festival in West Kotawaringin, which displays 58 types of typical wadai, is a concrete example of how cultural activities can support the preservation and development of traditional culinary delights.

Apart from that, festivals can be a means to introduce product innovations to a wide audience. For example, processing Dayak onions into herbal candy is a form of innovation that

has succeeded in attracting consumers' attention by offering added value in the form of health benefits. This innovation is in line with Howkins' (2001) opinion that creativity is a key element in creating high added value products.

METHODS

The research method used in this research is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are approaches that focus on in-depth understanding of social, cultural and human phenomena in certain contexts. In this research, qualitative methods were used to explore innovation in traditional Dayak culinary tourism products as a strategy to strengthen the creative economy in West Kotawaringin Regency. Qualitative research is very suitable because it allows researchers to explore the perspectives, experiences and practices of traditional culinary entrepreneurs and the local communities involved. This approach also pays attention to social and cultural dynamics which are the main context in the development of traditional culinary delights.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research involves collecting data in the form of narratives, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In this research, the data collection techniques used include semi-structured interviews with culinary entrepreneurs, cultural observers, and direct observation of culinary entrepreneurs who take part in traditional culinary festivals or activities such as the Wadai Menghampar Festival. Data analysis was carried out thematically by identifying patterns, themes and relationships between factors that influence culinary product innovation. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively understand how local cultural values, creativity, and economic challenges influence the innovation process.

The validity of data in qualitative research is maintained through data triangulation, namely comparing information from various sources such as interviews, observations and official documents. In addition, the data reflection and validation process was carried out by involving informants in clarifying the analysis results. A qualitative approach provides flexibility for researchers to adapt methods according to the context and needs of the research.

RESULTS

Based on interviews and in-depth observations conducted on respondents, it was found that innovation in traditional Dayak culinary tourism products in West Kotawaringin (Kobar) Regency plays a strategic role in strengthening the local creative economy. This research explores the perspectives of business actors, local communities and cultural observers on the conditions and challenges of traditional culinary innovation. The research results are summarized in the following main findings:

Condition of Dayak Traditional Culinary Products

Traditional Dayak culinary products in Kobar have great potential as a tourist attraction. Typical foods such as wadai putu, Javanese porridge, and processed Dayak onions have been recognized as part of local cultural identity. Interviews with business actors show that the raw materials used mostly come from local resources, such as sago, rice and typical Kalimantan spices. However, presentation and marketing methods are still conventional, so the appeal to the modern market is not yet optimal.

Efforts and Challenges in Product Innovation

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), innovation in products and marketing is a key factor in creating competitiveness in the modern market. Most business actors realize the importance of innovation, but face major obstacles in the form of limited access to technology, lack of knowledge about digital marketing strategies, and limited capital to diversify products. For example, Siti Fatimah's processing of Dayak onions into herbal candy is considered a successful innovation, but only a few other business actors have been able to follow in this footsteps. In addition, the dilemma between maintaining the authenticity of traditional flavors and meeting modern consumer preferences is a significant challenge.

An interview with the Kobar Tourism Office revealed that even though the government has provided a Creative Economy Information System (SI EKA) application, the level of adoption of this technology by business actors is still low. This is caused by a lack of targeted training and socialization.

The Role of Festivals and Cultural Promotion

Observations at the 2023 Menghampar Wadai Festival show that this activity has succeeded in increasing people's appreciation for traditional Dayak culinary delights. A total of 58 types of typical Dayak wadai are displayed at the festival, including some that are rarely found. Festival visitors not only consist of local people but also tourists from outside the area. Several business actors admit that this festival gives them the opportunity to promote their products to a wider market.

However, interviews with visitors showed that the lack of variety and innovation in the products displayed was one of the festival's shortcomings. Several tourists expressed a desire to see traditional culinary products packaged more modernly, for example in ready-to-eat packaging or that utilize advanced technology such as vacuum packaging to extend shelf life.

Successful Innovation Strategies

Research from Santoso et al. (2020) also found that successful innovation in the creative economy sector requires collaboration between business actors, government and local communities.

The research results show several innovation strategies that have been carried out by more advanced business actors. One example is the combination of traditional culinary delights with visual arts, such as product packaging depicting Dayak carving motifs. Apart from that, several business actors are starting to use social media to market their products, although this has not been done optimally. This is in line with research from Horng and Tsai (2012) which emphasizes the importance of innovation in the culinary industry to increase tourist attraction and maintain local cultural heritage.

The government has also played a role by providing training on product packaging and digital marketing, although the number of participants taking part in this training is still limited. Collaboration-based innovations, such as involving local arts communities and craftsmen in product development, show great potential for creating new appeal for traditional culinary products.

Impact on the Creative Economy

Innovations carried out in the traditional culinary sector have a direct impact on increasing the income of business actors. One business actor interviewed reported a 30% increase in turnover after updating packaging design and expanding marketing via social media. Apart from that, innovation has also opened up new employment opportunities, such as in the procurement of raw materials and product distribution.

However, this research also found that the impact of innovation has not been evenly distributed. Most micro and small business actors are still unable to access available support, either in the form of training or funding. This indicates the need for a more inclusive strategy to support all business actors in this sector.

Recommendations for Development

Based on the research results, several recommendations are given to support the development of innovation in traditional Dayak culinary products, including:

- Increase training and access to technology for business actors, especially regarding digital marketing and product diversification.
- Develop innovation strategies that maintain cultural authenticity but still meet the needs of the modern market.
- Expand promotions through cultural festivals that are more integrated with digital elements, such as marketing via online platforms during the festival.
- Promote collaboration between business actors, government and local communities to create innovative, sustainable products.

A study conducted by Hall and Gössling (2013) shows that one of the main challenges in traditional culinary innovation is maintaining a balance between cultural authenticity and adaptation to modern market preferences. This finding is in line with the dilemma faced by Dayak culinary entrepreneurs in maintaining authentic taste while meeting the tastes of today's consumers.

The results of this research show that innovation in traditional culinary tourism products has great potential to strengthen the creative economy in West Kotawaringin Regency, provided that existing challenges can be overcome through a strategic and collaborative approach.

CONCLUSION

Innovation in traditional Dayak culinary tourism products in West Kotawaringin (Kobar) Regency is a key strategy in strengthening the local creative economy while preserving cultural values. Traditional Dayak culinary delights, which are rich in unique flavors and historical value, have great potential to attract local and international tourists. However, the challenge of adapting products to modern market preferences without losing cultural authenticity is a central issue that must be overcome. The research results show that packaging-based innovation, digital marketing techniques, and integration with artistic elements are effective steps to increase the competitiveness of traditional culinary products. Government efforts, such as through the SI EKA

application and the Wadai Menghampar Festival, have shown a positive impact in promoting local culinary potential, although there is still a need to increase involvement and adoption by business actors more widely.

With a strategic approach that involves collaboration between government, business actors, local communities, and the use of technology, traditional Dayak culinary delights can be developed into superior products that not only strengthen cultural identity but also encourage sustainable economic growth. Innovation that is balanced between preserving cultural values and adapting to modern markets can be a driving force for increasing business income, creating jobs and expanding market reach. Therefore, sustainable synergy is needed in integrating innovation, culture and technology to make traditional Dayak culinary delights the main force in the creative economy in West Kotawaringin Regency

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