



Fostering Cultural Awareness through Gastronomy in UNSOED Student

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Abstract

This study analyses the effectiveness of gastronomy in fostering cultural awareness among UNSOED students, emphasizing how food can serve as a bridge to cultural understanding. This study was conducted in five different classes with a total of 150 students from Fakultas Ilmu Budaya and Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik UNSOED. This study uses a qualitative experiential approach with a focus on interactive and practical learning. Students participate in gastronomy practices where they bring traditional foods from local and international cultures (e.g. mendoan, sandwiches and baguettes), followed by tasting and discussion sessions. Data were collected through observation and reflective feedback from students to assess the impact of gastronomy experiences on the development of cultural awareness. This study found that tasting various foods significantly increased students' understanding of various cultural values and practices. In addition, this approach is in line with the objectives of the MBKM program, which emphasizes flexibility and real-world learning experiences. Gastronomy, as demonstrated in this study, has proven to be a practical and effective tool in fostering cultural awareness in students. By connecting food traditions to cultural history and social practices, students not only learn about different cultures but also develop a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity. The findings indicate that direct engagement with gastronomy significantly enhances student's cultural awareness by providing an immersive learning experience. The study reveals that experiential learning through gastronomy fosters open-mindedness, appreciation for diversity, and critical thinking regarding cultural differences. This research contributes to the field of cultural education by demonstrating the effectiveness of gastronomy as an educational tool. It highlights the potential integration of culinary-based cultural education into university curricula, providing a model that can be adapted in other educational institutions.

Keywords: *cultural awareness, experiment analysis, gastronomy, MBKM*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis efektivitas gastronomi dalam menumbuhkan kesadaran budaya di kalangan mahasiswa UNSOED, menekankan bagaimana makanan dapat menjadi jembatan pemahaman budaya. Penelitian ini dilakukan di lima kelas berbeda dengan jumlah mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Budaya dan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik UNSOED berjumlah 150 orang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif eksperiensial dengan fokus pembelajaran interaktif dan praktis. Siswa berpartisipasi dalam praktik gastronomi dengan membawa makanan tradisional dari budaya lokal dan internasional (misalnya mendoan, sandwich, dan baguette), diikuti dengan sesi pencicipan dan diskusi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan umpan balik reflektif dari siswa untuk menilai dampak pengalaman gastronomi terhadap pengembangan kesadaran budaya. Studi ini menemukan bahwa mencicipi berbagai makanan secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman siswa tentang

berbagai nilai dan praktik budaya. Selain itu, pendekatan ini sejalan dengan tujuan program MBKM yang menekankan pada fleksibilitas dan pengalaman belajar di dunia nyata. Gastronomi, seperti yang ditunjukkan dalam penelitian ini, telah terbukti menjadi alat yang praktis dan efektif dalam menumbuhkan kesadaran budaya pada siswa. Dengan menghubungkan tradisi makanan dengan sejarah budaya dan praktik sosial, siswa tidak hanya belajar tentang budaya yang berbeda namun juga mengembangkan apresiasi yang lebih dalam terhadap keragaman budaya.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan langsung dengan gastronomi secara signifikan meningkatkan kesadaran budaya mahasiswa dengan memberikan pengalaman belajar yang imersif. Penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa pembelajaran pengalaman melalui gastronomi mendorong sikap berpikiran terbuka, penghargaan terhadap keberagaman, serta pemikiran kritis terhadap perbedaan budaya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada bidang pendidikan budaya dengan menunjukkan efektivitas gastronomi sebagai alat edukasi. Studi ini menyoroti potensi integrasi pendidikan budaya berbasis kuliner ke dalam kurikulum universitas, yang dapat dijadikan model dan diadaptasi oleh institusi pendidikan lainnya.

Kata kunci: *Kesadaran Berbudaya, Analisis, MBKM, Gastronomi*

Introduction

Globalization of the world allows people to meet each other from various parts of the world with different cultures, beliefs and value systems. Even now the policy of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to promote MBKM provides many opportunities for students to go abroad which of course students will interact with people from various countries. The implementation of MBKM activities has indeed made students learn many things, but data also shows that many students experience culture shock, both in weather conditions, manners and food. The Independent Learning Program - Independent Campus (MBKM) is a program initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture which aims to encourage students to master various sciences as preparation for entering the world of work. Within MBKM itself, there are many overseas exchange programs. The MBKM program has provided opportunities for 1,000 of the best students to study at top universities in the world (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2021). With high mobility, students will inevitably meet with various citizens from other countries. The difference of climate, food, language, culture, these things cause culture shock for Indonesian students abroad (Prastyo, 2023). Even though they have gained knowledge about cultural differences, this is not enough to prevent students from experiencing culture shock. Researchers feel that students need a real cultural understanding so that students can feel the culture embedded in their hearts. Cultural awareness is not just theory but pragmatics. It is of crucial importance to be aware that, function to different cultures, the meaning that people give to certain activities could be different from your own (Constantin, 2009). Namely that it is crucial to understand cultural differences because the meaning understood by one person can be very different from others. The obstacles experienced by students when doing exchanges abroad are actually not only language but students tend to forget cultural awareness due to high enthusiasm at the beginning of their arrival. However, a week

later, culture shock began to appear due to a lack of cultural awareness. This obstacle in communicating is felt in the adaptation process related to a culture that is very different from the country of origin (Hadrian, 2023). Cross-cultural understanding has actually been taught in lectures. However, the instillation of cultural awareness still seems to need to be improved. It is proven that if it is just a theory, students will only know and at most understand. As Hadrian explained above, culture shock will actually be felt by students after one or two weeks in a foreign country. This shows that the importance of cultural awareness is not only knowing but also embedded in the body. Cross-cultural understanding requires a deeper method, which can provide the growth of cultural awareness. Gastronomy is understood not only as food. "*la gastronomie est un art*" (Renner, 1992).

Gastronomy is understood as art. Gastronomy can be understood as an effective way to describe the cultural identity of a country (Wachyuni, 2023). Food is believed to be the most accepted introduction to cultural differences by the world community. Through gastronomy as a medium, an understanding of cultural awareness will be provided to English Literature undergraduate students so that culture shock does not occur. Experiment analysis will be used as a reference for how to apply gastronomy as an effort to increase cultural awareness so that it can be measured accurately. "A practical working knowledge requires understanding many concepts and their relationships" (Seltman, 2018). Gastronomy represents a significant part of the cultural heritage and identity (Lin, Min-Pei Espe and Molina, 2021). Gastronomy is the identity of a culture and is the work of a culture. Etymologically, the word gastronomy comes from Greek, *Gestèr* = stomach and *Nomos* = law. So Gastronomy is literally 'the art of managing the stomach'. With such a literal meaning, overall it is concluded that gastronomy is a set of rules that define the art of choosing ingredients and flavors to make delicious food, rituals and good eating habits (Felayati, 2024). Gastronomy contains knowledge and skills. In addition, gastronomy is closely related to social class relations and divisions. "*La gastronomie est l'art d'utiliser la nourriture pour créer le bonheur*" (Zeldin, 1981). Gastronomy is the art of using food to create happiness. Gastronomy is part of art and art itself is culture. gastronomy is considered as part of cultural arts that reflects the identity of a society. Gastronomy in this case is one example of food as a cultural identity in a small form that can be brought into the classroom. can be presented in class. So that cultural and cross-cultural learning will be very effective with learning using gastronomy. students can see directly, smell and taste the taste of foreign cultures. this will reduce culture shock. students will taste French baguette cuisine in class before leaving for France, or students will taste ramen with a thick Japanese curry flavor before leaving for MBKM to Japan.

Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication that involves understanding cultural values, beliefs and human perceptions. Why humans do certain things and how humans see the world causes different actions from one person to another. Cultural differences and different value systems allow for friction in communication between communities. This shows the importance of Cultural Awareness to reduce miscommunication and facilitate communication between cultures. Students will learn about different cultures through food. Gastronomy is considered as the most acceptable carrier of different cultures in the world

community. This shows the importance of research on gastronomy as a means of increasing students' awareness of cultural diversity. This study will look at increasing cultural awareness through gastronomy in students. Culture is defined by Geert Hofstede as the software of the mind. His theory explains that culture is a mental system that begins in childhood and helps define us differently from others. Culture has symbols, heroes, rituals and values (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J. and Minkov, 2010).

There are many food theories depending on the theory used such as ecology, economics, optimal foraging, and culture that cross various disciplines (Virtaux, 2007). Each of these theories has important points that are significant in different settings and times. Food culture theory has long been established by research (Fischler, 1988). The first famous writer to comment on food and culture was Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who in 1825 wrote "The Physiology of Taste." He said, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are." "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man you are." (J.-A. B. Savarin, 1869). Understanding international culture is often done by choosing to study abroad, and this has a very positive correlation. "The cooking traditions of a specific area reveal the character of the society and the mentality of its members. These traditions are an obvious legacy of those who lived before us..." (Fonte, 2002). The cooking traditions of a specific area reveal the character of the society and the mentality of its members. These traditions are clearly the legacy of those who lived before us...". Food becomes a cultural product because it has undergone a process of social reconstruction as something is considered a cultural product when it is socially constructed, inherited through the pattern of the presence of symbols, meanings and regulations attached to it (Martin, Judith N. & Nakayama, 2004). Whereas culture is something that is learned and accumulated from social life (Cole, 2008). When compared to other cultural objects, eating behavior can be said to be a behavior that is carried out by everyone throughout the world, and food is a universal object. The study of food highlights the reciprocal influence between culture and the geographical and ecological contexts in which they develop and evolve (Bagwell, L. S. and Bernheim, 1996).

As globalization continues to shape the modern world, cultural awareness becomes increasingly essential, especially for university students who will later engage in a diverse and interconnected society. Food, as a fundamental cultural element, serves as a gateway to understanding different traditions, values, and histories. Gastronomy provides an accessible and tangible way for students to engage with cultural diversity, as it involves sensory experiences and social interactions that deepen their understanding of other cultures (Montanari, 2006). In the context of Universitas Jenderal Soedirman (UNSOED), students come from various backgrounds, offering a unique opportunity to foster cultural awareness through gastronomy. The process of learning about and experiencing different cuisines helps students build empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity, aligning with UNSOED's mission to promote cross-cultural understanding.

In Indonesia, where food is deeply rooted in historical, religious, and social dimensions, the study of gastronomy plays a crucial role in cultural identity formation. Traditional food practices are embedded with values that reflect societal

norms and communal harmony, making them an effective medium for cultural education (Goody, 1982). By incorporating gastronomic experiences into student activities, such as food festivals, cooking workshops, and culinary exchanges, UNSOED students can gain deeper insights into their own heritage while also appreciating global cuisines. Furthermore, exposure to different food traditions enables students to recognize the cultural significance of food beyond mere sustenance, enhancing their global competence and intercultural communication skills (Kittler, P. G., Sucher, K. P., & Nahikian-Nelms, 2016). Moreover, the integration of gastronomy into cultural awareness programs aligns with the broader academic discourse on food studies as a means of fostering intercultural understanding. Previous studies indicate that food is not only a cultural symbol but also a tool for diplomacy, fostering social cohesion, and breaking down stereotypes. At UNSOED, promoting cultural awareness through gastronomy can be a strategic approach to enhancing students' sensitivity toward cultural differences while strengthening their sense of identity and belonging. By engaging with food as a cultural artifact, students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper appreciation of the intricate relationships between tradition, history, and social dynamics. Thus, gastronomy serves as an effective medium to bridge cultural gaps and prepare students for an increasingly multicultural world.

Research Novelty and State of the Art

The importance of cultural education in enhancing students' awareness of diversity, research specifically linking gastronomy as a primary approach in cultural learning remains limited (Goody, 1982). Most studies on cultural awareness tend to focus on theoretical frameworks or conventional methods, such as literature-based learning or direct exposure to cross-cultural environments (Roehl, 2018). This study offers a novel perspective by positioning gastronomy as a medium for strengthening students' cross-cultural understanding. This approach not only provides a more contextual and sensory learning experience but also introduces an interactive and inclusive educational method applicable in academic settings (Symons, 1999). Therefore, this study contributes to the academic discourse by demonstrating how gastronomy can serve as an effective tool for enhancing cultural awareness.

In the context of cultural education, numerous studies have explored methods to foster cultural awareness among students. Traditional approaches often emphasize classroom-based learning, such as literature, history, and direct cultural immersion through exchange programs (Deardorff, 2006). While these methods are effective, they may not fully engage students in an experiential and multisensory manner (Kramsch, 2011). Recent research has highlighted the role of experiential learning in deepening cultural understanding (Long, 2015). This research examined the role of food in cultural transmission, noting that gastronomy serves as a tangible and engaging medium through which individuals can connect with different cultural traditions. However, most of these studies focus on gastronomy in tourism and heritage preservation rather than its pedagogical application in academic settings. This study builds on existing research by integrating gastronomy as an educational tool in university-level cultural awareness programs. While previous studies have explored food as a cultural artifact (Bourdieu, 1984).

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of gastronomy in fostering cultural awareness among university students. By engaging directly with diverse culinary traditions, students gain a deeper understanding of cultural practices and values, enhancing their intercultural competence (Hall, 1976). This research aims to assess the impact of gastronomy-based experiential learning on student's openness, appreciation of diversity, and critical thinking regarding cultural differences. Furthermore, the study explores the integration of gastronomic education into academic curricula as a means to strengthen cultural literacy. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for educational institutions in designing interactive learning experiences that promote cross-cultural understanding. By demonstrating the effectiveness of food as a medium for cultural education, this study contributes to the broader discourse on innovative pedagogical approaches in intercultural learning (Kolb, 1984).

Method

The research was conducted using the experimental method. In general, the experimental method is a teaching method that invites students to conduct experiments as proof, checking that the theory that has been learned is indeed true (Suparno, 2007). The experimental method used is the guided experimental method. Guided by the researcher in choosing the experiment to be carried out until the observation of the results. Then the results will be analyzed using experiment analysis which is the latest theory from Howard J. Seltman. Experiment analysis is possible to be used in difficult and time-consuming learning (Seltman, 2018)

CHAPTER 1. THE BIG PICTURE

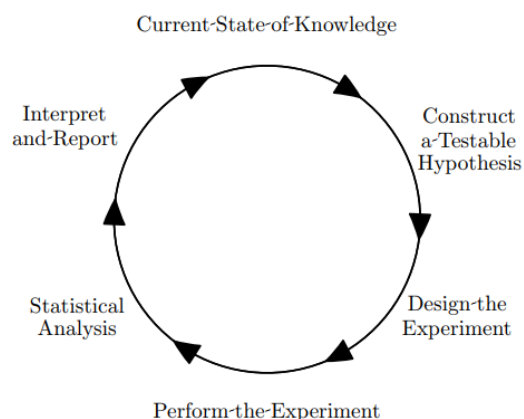


Figure 1 Big Picture

By using the big picture, it will be recorded with feedback from the research object, in this case, the undergraduate students. Based on the type and source of data required, the data collection techniques used include Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. Data analysis in phenomenological

research is carried out interactively and continuously through the data analysis model introduced by Spradley as follows; Domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis, discovering cultural themes (Jensen & Jankowski, 2002).

This study employs a **qualitative research** approach with a descriptive-analytical method to examine the role of gastronomy in fostering cultural awareness among students at Universitas Jenderal Soedirman (UNSOED). The research is conducted through a **case study design** As I have explained in the analysis diagram by Seltman, which allows for an in-depth exploration of students' engagement with food as a medium for cultural learning (Creswell, 2013). The data sources include primary data collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with students participating in gastronomy-based cultural activities. Secondary data is gathered from literature reviews, academic journals, and media reports on culinary traditions and cultural identity (Yin, 2018). The data collection techniques involve participant observations of students' interactions with food, in-depth interviews to capture their perceptions, and FGDs to explore shared experiences and reflections. The data is then analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying key patterns and themes that emerge from students' narratives and experiences (Braun, V., & Clarke, 2006). Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how gastronomy can serve as an educational tool for enhancing cultural awareness in university settings.

Result and Discussion

In an era of globalization, cultural awareness has become an essential skill for individuals to navigate the complexities of an interconnected world. As societies become increasingly diverse, it is imperative for educational institutions to equip students with the ability to understand, appreciate, and respect different cultures. One effective way to achieve this is through experiential learning, where students engage directly with cultural elements rather than relying solely on theoretical knowledge. Gastronomy, as an integral part of culture, offers a unique avenue to foster cultural understanding. Food is not merely a means of sustenance; it embodies history, traditions, values, and identity. The way people prepare, consume, and associate meaning with food varies across societies, making it a rich medium for exploring cultural differences and similarities. By engaging with gastronomy, students can experience a tangible and interactive form of cultural learning that goes beyond books and lectures.

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in shaping students' global perspectives and preparing them for multicultural environments. Incorporating gastronomy into the academic curriculum provides students with a direct and immersive way to interact with foreign cultures. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize active participation and hands-on experiences in knowledge acquisition. By tasting, preparing, and discussing international cuisines, students engage in sensory learning that deepens their understanding of cultural diversity. Moreover, gastronomy as a pedagogical tool helps bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world applications, allowing students to grasp cultural nuances in a way that is both engaging and

memorable. The integration of gastronomy into cultural studies also fosters cross-cultural dialogue, encouraging students to reflect on their own food traditions while gaining insights into others. In doing so, they develop not only cultural awareness but also empathy, open-mindedness, and a greater appreciation for global diversity.

Through gastronomy as a medium, an understanding of cultural awareness will be provided to students of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Jenderal Soedirman University so that there is no culture shock. Experiment analysis will be used as a reference for how to apply gastronomy as an effort to increase cultural awareness so that it can be measured precisely. "A practical working knowledge requires understanding many concepts and their relationships" (Samovar, Larry A, 2017).

Experiments are often used to study things that are difficult to understand. There are several types of experimental methods offered, but researchers will use the guided experimental method. This selection is considered the most qualified to be used in learning cultural awareness. UNSOED students were selected as research objects because they are likely to participate in the MBKM program abroad. Not only through MBKM, it is possible that students have broad opportunities because of their mastery of foreign languages. In addition, students in the 2024 intake are new students who allow awareness to grow more fertile. Cultural awareness that has been embedded will be very useful later when students will undertake overseas programs. The purpose of this study is to increase cultural awareness in UNSOED students in the 2024 intake in order to reduce the occurrence of culture shock which is an obstacle to the MBKM program. Culture is defined by Geert Hofstede as the software of the mind. His theory explains that culture is a mental system that begins in childhood and helps define us differently from others. Culture has symbols, heroes, rituals and values (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J. and Minkov, 2010). There are many theories of food depending on the theory used such as ecology, economics, optimal foraging, and culture that cross various disciplines (Virtaux, 2007). Each of these theories has important points that are significant in different settings and times. The theory of food culture has long been established by anthropological research (Tylor, 1871). The first famous author to discuss food and culture was Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who in 1825 wrote "The Physiology of Taste". He said, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are." "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man you are." (J. A. B. Savarin, 1825). The importance of understanding and respecting local culture is increasingly important in an era of intense globalization. International business knowledge is one of the knowledge that must be possessed by someone in order to be able to enter the international business arena. Currently, cross-cultural awareness is the basis for educating students. Achieving global awareness and understanding is important. Understanding international culture is often done by choosing to study abroad, and this is very positively correlated (J.-A. B. Savarin, 1869). "The cooking traditions of a specific area reveal the character of the society and the mentality of its members. These traditions are an obvious legacy of those who lived before us..." (Fonte, 2002). The cooking traditions of a specific area reveal the character of the society and the mentality of its members. These traditions are clearly the legacy of those who lived before us...". Food becomes a cultural product because it has undergone a process of social reconstruction as something is considered a cultural product when it is socially

constructed, inherited through the pattern of the presence of symbols, meanings and regulations attached to it (Martin, Judith N. & Nakayama, 2004). Whereas culture is something that is learned and accumulated from social life (Cole, 2008). When compared to other cultural objects, eating behavior can be said to be a behavior that is carried out by everyone throughout the world, and food is a universal object. The study of food highlights the reciprocal influence between culture and the geographical and ecological contexts in which they develop and evolve (Bagwell, L. S. and Bernheim, 1996).

The experiment was conducted by presenting foreign food to the students' table. Then the students were asked to observe, see the shape, feel the texture, smell the aroma of the food and taste the taste. After providing an understanding that food is also a vital part of a society's culture, students have an understanding of tasting the culture of other societies directly and giving their opinions on cultural awareness. Students argue that by experiencing direct learning through gastronomy, students have indirectly come into contact with other foreign cultures, so that this makes it easier for students to understand foreign cultures. before increasing cultural awareness, students must first know the various cultures in the world and then study and understand after that, of course students' cultural awareness increases. Relation to Previous Research Consistency with Literature: The findings are consistent with previous research showing that intercultural education through gastronomy can be effective in increasing cultural awareness (Samovar, Larry A, 2017). Contribution to the Field of Study: This study expands the understanding of how gastronomy can be used as a tool in multicultural education, especially in higher education settings in Indonesia. Practical Implications for Curriculum Development: The results of this study can be used as a basis for integrating gastronomy modules into the educational curriculum at UNSOED, with the aim of increasing cultural awareness among students. Application in Other Environments: Similar programs can be adapted by other universities to promote cultural awareness and diversity. Limitations of the Study Limited Sample: This study only involved students from one university, so the results may not be generalizable to a wider student population. Program Duration: The limited time of the program (only one semester) may affect how deep the cultural understanding is obtained by students.

Beyond mere food tasting, the introduction of gastronomy as a medium for fostering cultural awareness enables students to explore the historical, geographical, and socio-economic contexts of different cuisines. Every dish carries embedded narratives of migration, trade, and cultural adaptation, allowing students to recognize how global influences shape culinary identities. For example, Indonesian cuisine itself is a product of centuries of trade, colonialism, and cultural interactions, as seen in the use of spices from the Maluku Islands or the influence of Chinese cooking techniques. By drawing parallels between their own food culture and those of other societies, students begin to understand that food is more than sustenance—it is a cultural artifact that embodies collective memories and identities. This realization fosters an appreciation for diversity and deepens their engagement in intercultural dialogue.

Food has a profound psychological and emotional impact on individuals. When students engage with unfamiliar cuisines, they not only learn about new flavors but

also experience a sense of novelty, curiosity, and sometimes even hesitation. These psychological reactions can serve as a metaphor for intercultural encounters—initial uncertainty may give way to acceptance and appreciation. Socially, food is a medium for building relationships, and shared dining experiences create spaces for intercultural communication. Within the context of this study, students reported that discussing the origins, preparation methods, and symbolism of different dishes allowed them to engage with their peers in deeper conversations about cultural identity. This process aligns with Hall's (1997) theory of representation, which suggests that cultural meanings are constructed through shared symbols, including food. Thus, gastronomy serves as an effective pedagogical tool that bridges social and psychological dimensions of cultural learning.

Given the positive outcomes observed in this study, further research should explore how gastronomy-based learning can be systematically incorporated into broader educational frameworks. One potential development is the inclusion of collaborative culinary projects, where students actively participate in cooking traditional dishes from various cultures. This hands-on approach would provide a more immersive experience, allowing students to engage in cross-cultural teamwork and problem-solving. Additionally, expanding the duration of the program beyond one semester would allow for more in-depth reflections on cultural identity and food politics. Future studies could also consider the role of digital platforms in fostering culinary cultural exchange, such as virtual cooking classes or intercultural food blogging. By integrating gastronomy into the curriculum in a more structured and prolonged manner, universities like UNSOED can further enhance their efforts in preparing students to navigate an increasingly interconnected world with heightened cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

This study shows that the gastronomic approach is effective in increasing cultural awareness among students. This is in line with the theory that direct experience and active participation can deepen cultural understanding. Active Participation: The high level of student participation indicates that experiential learning methods, such as cooking and group discussions, can increase engagement and understanding. Attitude Change: The results showing positive attitude changes support the view that learning about culture through practical aspects, such as food, can promote tolerance and appreciation for diversity.

By incorporating food as a medium for cultural exploration, universities can create more engaging and memorable learning experiences that go beyond theoretical discussions. The study reinforces the idea that cultural learning should be interactive, immersive, and multisensory to be truly effective. The significance of this approach aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize the importance of active engagement and personal experience in shaping knowledge. Future curricular innovations should take into account the potential of gastronomy not only as an educational tool but also as a means of fostering social cohesion among students from diverse backgrounds.

While this study provides strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of the gastronomic approach, further research is needed to explore its long-term impact on

students' cultural awareness and attitudes. Future studies could examine whether students retain their newfound cultural appreciation over time and whether it influences their behavior in multicultural settings beyond the classroom. Additionally, expanding this approach to a comparative study across multiple universities or cultural contexts would provide valuable insights into its adaptability and effectiveness in different educational environments. To maximize its impact, institutions should consider integrating structured gastronomy-based modules into intercultural communication or global studies courses. By refining and expanding this methodology, educators can continue to develop innovative strategies that empower students with a deeper understanding of cultural diversity, ultimately preparing them for meaningful global interactions.

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of gastronomy as an educational tool for fostering cultural awareness among students. Based on these results the study offers a framework for designing interactive and engaging learning experiences that enhance students' intercultural competence. It provides a model that can be adapted by other universities and educational institutions seeking to implement experiential cultural learning.

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