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## Beyond the Rationality of Taste: Unpacking the Meaning of Identity in Papua People's Culinary Design

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### KEYWORDS

local identity;  
local cuisine;  
Sentani people;  
design approach;  
culinary culture

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates how food design approaches can reinforce local identity in Sentani cuisine by analyzing key elements—raw materials, cooking techniques, presentation, and narratives—to balance cultural authenticity with innovation. Grounded in the cultural erosion risks posed by globalization, the research addresses two objectives: (1) identifying how local identity manifests in culinary components, and (2) evaluating how such design enhances dining experiences. Employing a multi-method approach (interviews, participant observation, document analysis), findings reveal that Sentani cuisine serves as both artistic expression and cultural marker, with women playing pivotal roles as innovators. Artistic interventions (murals, branding) and traditional aesthetics were shown to strengthen community engagement and tourism appeal. Implications include a framework for culturally rooted culinary innovation, strategies for sustainable tourism, and recommendations for digital preservation tools (AR/VR). By merging food design with cultural preservation, this study offers a model for Indigenous cuisines globally, ensuring heritage sustainability while fostering economic growth.

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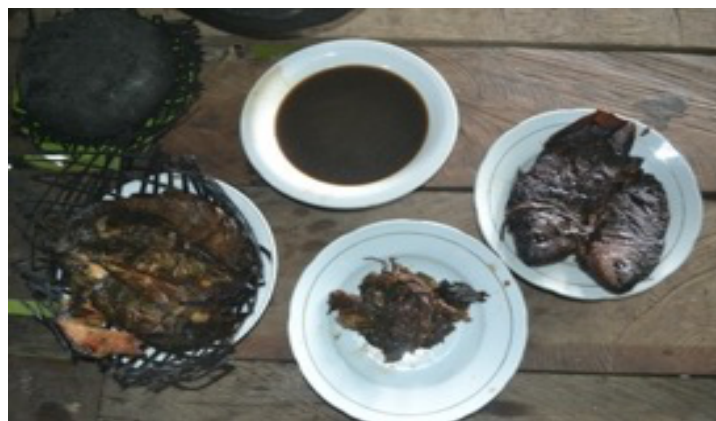
### INTRODUCTION

Local cuisine that reflects the cultural identity of a community has long been the center of attention in culinary and food design. The Sentani people, a community living in the Papua region of Indonesia, have a unique culinary heritage that illustrates their cultural identity and profound value (Fig. 1). The strong Sentani identity is expressed through their local cuisine, which incorporates special elements such as varied ingredients, traditional cooking techniques, and culturally meaningful presentations, influencing the dining experience. This cuisine is more than just a daily meal; it reflects the history, traditions, and social values rooted in Sentani society.



**Figure 1.** Map of the Sentani People Settlement in Papua. *Source: Mambraku 2023*

Local identity in Sentani cuisine not only plays a crucial role in cultural preservation but also holds potential for the culinary and tourism industries. The Sentani people, who have long lived a life closely connected to the surrounding nature, utilize local ingredients such as unique fish, tubers, and wild plants to craft dishes that are not only rich in flavor but also carry significant cultural importance (Mambraku, 2019). These dishes reflect traditional hunting, fishing, and farming histories (Fig. 2). However, like many indigenous peoples worldwide, the Sentani people have encountered challenges in preserving their identity and culture amid globalization. External influences like shifts in food culture driven by social and economic changes pose threats to the sustainability and authenticity of local Sentani cuisine, as exemplified by the case of sago (Swadling P.; Wagner, 2019).



**Figure 2.** A Dish of Fish, Vegetables, and Black Sauce. *Source: Mambraku 2018*

Various studies of food culture in the context of the Sentani world and local cuisine have been conducted (Busse, 2019; Camp, 1982; Gumerman, 1997; Kanbir, 2021; Parsons, 2016; Poe, 2001; Sunseri, 2017; Tsu, 2010; Voss, 2005; Walonen Michael K. & Hackler, 2012; Wilk, 1999). This study offers valuable insights into the complicated relationships in eating culture and explores the captivating world in which the culinary traditions of the Sentani serve as a canvas for artistic expression, encapsulating their cultural identity, heritage, and innovation. Sentani gastronomy is not simply a means of satiety; rather, it is a profound cultural expression rooted in history and tradition (Montanari M.; Sonnenfeld, 2006; Wilk, 1999). The culinary practices of phuyakha communities often reflect their deep connections to the environment and their distinctive ways of life. "Phuyakha" is another term for the Sentani community, who also

frequently refer to themselves as "Phuyakha Bhu," meaning the people who inhabit Lake Sentani. Recognizing art and food as powerful media for preserving and celebrating cultural heritage in various forms, Sentani local cuisine is a testament to this synergy, where traditional dishes are not only nutritious but also serve as repositories of knowledge and cultural identity (Montanari M.; Sonnenfeld, 2006).

The creative reinterpretation of Sentani ethnic cuisine by culinary artists has emerged as a key factor in the reinterpretation of traditional dishes. Díaz Mujica et al. highlighted the transformation of traditional recipes into culinary works of art infused with innovation and creativity. The Sentani culinary landscape symbolizes this blend of tradition and innovation. Culinary arts, with their emphasis on artistic aesthetics, play a crucial role in extending experiences beyond taste and aroma (Bretherton & Vogler, 2013). Sentani local cuisine exemplifies how artistry transcends taste, encompassing the visual presentation of dishes and creating a feast for both the eyes and palate. Indigenous foods in Sentani have evolved into cultural markers, aligning with the global trend in which indigenous people consider their food a symbol of cultural identity, resilience, and survival.

Sentani local cuisine serves as an example of this pattern, with the consumption of traditional dishes becoming a means for the community to reaffirm its cultural roots and distinct heritage (Grayson, 2024; Preetha A. T.; Lazarus, 2024). Art emerged as a catalyst for change in the broader context of culinary innovation. Renowned chefs, including Ferran Adrià, have demonstrated how creativity, presentation, and artistry can transform the dining experience (Spence & Youssef, 2018). Artistic interventions in local food cultures revitalize urban environments and strengthen community bonds (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012). The Sentani culinary landscape is shaped by interventions such as community carving, painting, gardening, sago pooping, and branding strategies, which play crucial roles in promoting local food and fostering community engagement (Gertler et al., 2016; Mougeot, 2010; Siswanto & Dafirah, 2024). Sentani local cuisine, as a microcosm, mirrors the broader relationship between Sentani art and ethnic gastronomy, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between tradition, innovation, culture, and creativity at this intersection. A deeper exploration of the Sentani culinary arts reveals that each dish is a cultural art piece that serves as a testament to the enduring connection between nature, art, and gastronomy, and the embodiment of Sentani's rich cultural identity (Khan, 2023).

This study investigates how food design approaches can enhance the local identity of Sentani cuisine by examining key elements such as ingredients, cooking methods, presentation, and food narratives of the Orang Sentani, demonstrating how such an approach can preserve cultural authenticity while encouraging innovation. The research aims to provide deeper insights into the role of identity in Sentani cuisine and how its integration into food design can maintain traditional values while supporting culinary evolution in line with cultural heritage.

This study advances existing research on Sentani cuisine by explicitly integrating a *food design approach* to explore how local identity can be systematically embedded in culinary components (raw materials, techniques, presentation) while fostering innovation, a dimension less emphasized in prior works like Mambraku (2019) or Swadling et al. (2019) (Mambraku, 2019). Unlike studies focusing solely on cultural preservation (Busse, 2019; Camp, 1982; Swadling P.; Wagner, 2019), or gastronomic symbolism (Gumerman, 1997; Kanbir, 2021), this research bridges culinary art and socio-economic development by proposing actionable

strategies (e.g., artistic interventions, community-based tourism) to enhance cultural sustainability, a gap identified in Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012). Additionally, it highlights the *transformative role of Sentani women as culinary innovators*, a perspective underexplored in earlier literature (Parsons, 2016), and introduces digital storytelling (e.g., AR/VR) as a novel tool for heritage preservation, contrasting with traditional documentation methods (Khan, 2023; Kuhnlein H. V. & Johnson, 2013).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a multi-method approach, conducting in-depth interviews with four key informants, engaging in participant observation at the Sentani site, and analyzing documents (Berg Bruce L. & Lune, 2018; Kumar, 2011; Strauss Anselm L. & Corbin, 1997). The primary aim was to understand the role of art in local culinary development, culinary innovation, and cultural significance (Appadurai, 1986; Cicourel, 1981; Sharma, 2020). Thematic analysis methods were applied to analyze the data gathered from interviews, observations, and document analysis (Miles M. B.; Huberman, 2013). The study rigorously examined the ethical aspects and acknowledged research limitations, such as language barriers and potential bias (Smith, 1999). Triangulation was used to enhance the accuracy and validity of findings (Yin, 2018). Despite the qualitative nature of this study, the methodology offers profound insights into the Sentani local culinary context (Patton, 2015).

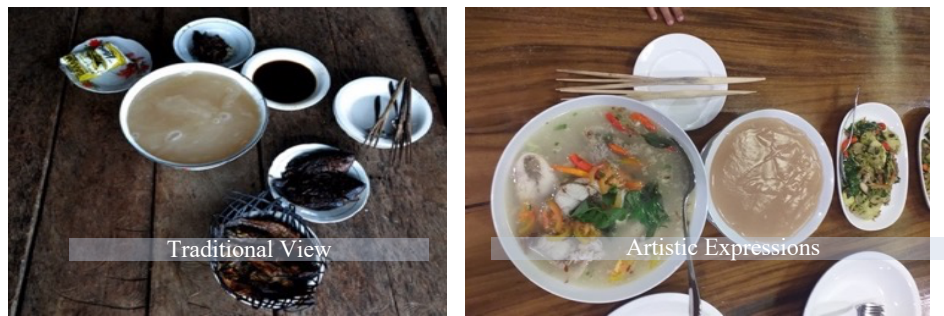
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Key findings*

We emphasize that art plays a central role in Sentani local cuisine, not only providing taste satisfaction but also serving as a means of artistic expression. The important aspects that we emphasize are as follows: an impressive culinary aesthetic is crafted through creative cooking and serving techniques, the utilization and processing of taro and black vegetables in food soups, and intricate decoration. This underscores the profound role of art in shaping unique and enthralling culinary experiences. The close relationship between the culinary and visual arts is reflected in this culinary art, where visually beautified offerings go beyond the mere function of nutrition, creating a more immersive dining experience. This in turn prompts a deeper consideration of how art influences the perception of food flavors and aromas. Furthermore, the visual arts in Sentani cuisine serve as channels for expressing the cultural and historical value of food.

### **Artistic expression in culinary presentation**

Local cuisine in the Sentani region accentuates artistic expression in its presentation, revealing that these dishes not only satisfy the taste buds but also stimulate the visual senses. By creatively processing traditional recipes using black and clear bright colors, the cuisine engineers interesting papeda, fish, and vegetable processing, as well as embellishments that reflect art, changing culinary aesthetics in astonishing ways.



**Figure 3.** a. Traditional View, b. Artistic Expressions. *Source: Mambraku 2018*

The traditional culinary dishes of the Sentani, featuring sago processed until thickened, a natural black sauce produced from taro leaves, and fish pressed with taro leaves in earthenware containers, are shown in Figure 3a (Traditional View). The dishes are served on the floor of the house in a triangular arrangement using simple serving techniques and are accompanied by cutlery, plates, basins, and salt. This image emphasizes the essence of the dish, reflecting the authenticity and hereditary wisdom of cooking. Although this traditional approach may be simpler than the artistic expression version, it still plays an important role in preserving the deep cultural roots and culinary heritage of the Sentani. According to Y. Puhili (interview, 18-07-2018):

...The way mama cooks and arranges the food, it is never a problem; all families come to eat with relish because the important thing is that women must be good at turning *papedae* and serving *papedae* for husbands and children or guests who come. Every time my husband and children see what I cook, they will remember me; I always make *papeda* for them to eat...




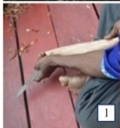


From the statement above, it can be seen that women play a central role in meeting household food needs; therefore, what mothers need is the ability to cook and serve food properly so that children, husbands, and guests will enjoy the food that they serve. In Sentani culture, women play a role not only in cooking but also in finding food and even selling crops from farming or fishing to meet the food needs of their households.

The artistic expression is exemplified in Figure 3b (Artistic Expression), featuring a culinary dish in which bright and contrasting colors are employed to achieve an attractive appearance. Serving techniques are used to combine colors, including red from chili and tomatoes and green from leaves, and a create a presentation that lines up lengthwise, following the shape of the table, emphasizing the dominance of white melamine tableware. This illustration demonstrates how culinary artistic expression enhances the dining experience, imparts a deep artistic dimension to the appearance of the dish, and stimulates a sense of sight.









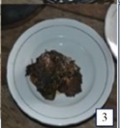
### **Cultural significance of indigenous gastronomy**

We emphasize the significance of Sentani indigenous gastronomy in representing the Sentani cultural heritage and traditional values. Sentani food, serving not merely as sustenance but also as a symbol of identity and cultural richness, reflects its cultural significance through the utilization of traditional ingredients and cooking techniques passed down from generation to generation. The preservation and celebration of Sentani culture is achieved through these elements, illustrating how Sentani local cuisine embodies its cultural importance in indigenous gastronomy. This table shows the diverse elements that constitute its cultural meaning in Sentani cuisine.



Traditional Materials	Traditional Techniques	Final Shape	Cultural Meanings
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The type of wood used is Rum wood (endemic)</li> <li>2. Traditional forks are called <i>Hiloi</i>, which is being traditionally formed using an iron chisel (24 mm)</li> <li>3. <i>Hiloi</i> has been made, serving to eat papeda.</li> </ol> <p><i>Hiloi</i> is analogous to the legs of a cassowary, which firmly defends the truth, optimistically looking to the future.</p>
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The type of wood used is sowang wood (endemic)</li> <li>2. Traditional spatula called <i>Yanggolu</i></li> <li>3. Serves to stir the essence of sago starch into <i>papeda</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Yanggolu</i> is likened to an oar (traditional boat), which can solve problems calmly, benefit many people</p>

**Figure 4. Traditional Cutlery**

Traditional Ingredients	Traditional Cooking Techniques	Final Shape	Cultural Meanings
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sago in Sentani language is called .</li> <li>2. A symbol of life, a sago tree has a deep meaning related to primary needs.</li> <li>3. <i>Fi</i> is like a mother, who can meet household food needs by serving Papeda as a staple food.</li> </ol>
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Sentani snakehead fish (endemic) is called .</li> <li>2. <i>Large</i> kayouw were handed over to , an orphan, widow as a form of respect.</li> <li>3. <i>Kayouw</i> is identical to black fish soup pressed with certain concoctions</li> </ol>
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taro leaves are called</li> <li>2. <i>Onifea</i> is a mandatory menu that is often served with snakehead fish by means of pressure</li> <li>3. During the Pacific war, people hid in swamps and sago forests, to survive taro leaves were processed by smoking over coals to dry as well as to maintain food availability</li> </ol>

**Figure 5. Traditional Foodways**

This illustration emphasizes the significance of local cuisine in upholding authenticity and safeguarding Sentani culture, serving as a means of preserving cultural heritage and traditional values. Sentani cuisine goes beyond merely being about food; it constitutes a profound expression of culture, tradition, and meaning. This study also discovered traditional cutlery crafted from local raw materials, highlighting how both food and traditional cutlery serve as symbols of cultural identity and heritage that require preservation.

### Culinary artists as creative innovators

The role of women in creating the culinary landscape in Sentani is very important. They not only retain traditional dishes but also act as creative innovators who recreate them through innovative culinary techniques and contemporary imagination. The result is a dish that deepens the cultural and artistic value of its performance.



**Figure 6. Women as Creative Culinary Artists. Source: Mambraku 2018**

In this process, Sentani women who are experts in traditional cuisine, including Y, Puhili (2018), Y.A. Wally (2022), and S. Epa, revealed how they, as custodians of culinary heritage, play a crucial role in creating the Sentani culinary landscape. Wally emphasized, “The role of women is very important because we are custodians of the culinary heritage of families and communities. We not only cook these dishes but also ensure the recipes are passed down and keep them alive.”

Puhili pointed out, “Take note that in almost every event it is the women who are entrusted with finding groceries, taking care of the kitchen, and providing food for guests. We are responsible to Ondoafi, all traditional officials, and guests who attend. We ensure that food and drink are available, even if more is given to guests to take home.”

Epa S added, “Of course, we also try to develop new dishes with innovative touches. We blend traditional culinary techniques with our creative ideas. We strive to not only maintain but also update and provide new nuances to these dishes.”

Epa S also highlighted, “Yes, of course. This creates pride in us. In addition, people are becoming increasingly interested in tasting and learning about these new dishes, which deepens their understanding of the richness of our culture. As a result, we manage to create dishes that are not only delicious but also deepen cultural and artistic values, creating a special culinary experience.”



**Figure 7.** Innovative Culinary Techniques. *Source: Mambraku 2018*

These statements provide insights into the role of women in the preservation and development of the Sentani cultural landscape, in which women play a crucial role as custodians of traditional culinary heritage, not only as food processors but also as creative innovators who create new dishes using innovative culinary techniques and the contemporary imagination. They have not only preserved but developed recipes for generations, creating delicious dishes that have deep cultural and artistic value. Through culinary innovation, Sentani women have a positive impact on society, sparking a sense of pride and increasing people’s interest in exploring and understanding cultural richness through special culinary experiences. Their role as an expression of identity through food is an integral part of the cultural dynamics of the Sentani people.

### **Food as a cultural marker**

The local cuisine of Sentani not only reinforces the cultural identity of the Sentani people and serves as a source of pride but also constitutes a means for them to express their cultural roots and preserve their cultural heritage, as depicted in Figures 3a, 3b, and 5.

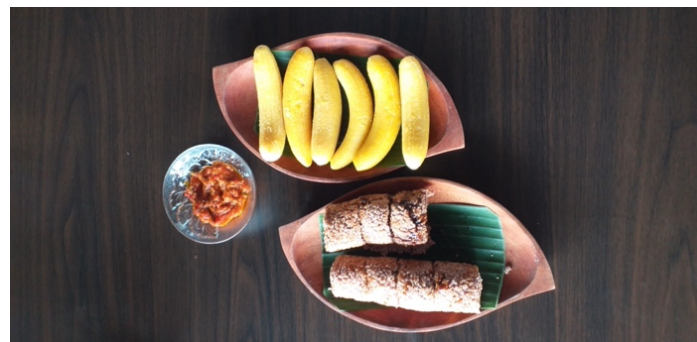
In an interview on October 29, 2022, Lewi Puhili explained how food plays an important role in the culture of the Sentani people. Local food is not only a nutritional aspect; it is also a strong symbol of cultural identity. Lewi Puhili emphasizes, “We consider our typical food an inseparable part of who we are as Sentani people living on this lake. Humans, animals, and plants all contribute to our identity...”

Preserving traditional food is a top priority for the Sentani people, as Lewi Puhili explains. They not only cook and enjoy these foods in their daily lives but also consider them a form of cultural heritage preservation. Lewi Puhili highlights the importance of involving younger generations in the cooking process and passing recipes down. This is how they maintain the authenticity and cultural values behind each dish, such as papeda with fish or vegetables with black gravy.

The above shows how humans establish an inherent identity relationship through the source of their food, where food holds profound significance and serves as a powerful means of cultural expression. As revealed by Kristian Epa in an interview on January 28, 2023:

...The Sentani see food as a very powerful means of expression. Each dish not only reflects our distinctive taste and aroma but is also an expression of our rich culture and history. Cooking is more than just a daily activity; it's our way of celebrating and conveying our cultural identity to the world...

Kristian Epa further explained, “Innovation is key in maintaining our traditional dishes. In this restaurant, we not only cook in the same way as our ancestors but also try new techniques and combine them with traditional ingredients and serving techniques. It's our way of ensuring that our dishes remain relevant and engaging, while still maintaining the essence of the culture we love. I and the rest of the staff at this restaurant embody this commitment.”



**Figure 8.** Boiled Bananas, Roasted Sago, and Sauce on the Table. *Source: Mambraku 2023*

### **Artistic intervention in local cuisine**

Artistic interventions, including wall paintings, community murals, replicas of traditional boats, and branding, have actively transformed the local food culture in Sentani. Additionally, this study provides evidence of intervention processes promoting local food, encouraging community participation, and creating an environment in which art and gastronomy coexist harmoniously. Community wall paintings and murals provide a visual means of celebrating traditional Sentani dishes. They not only generate visual interest in local food locations but also confer a distinctive identity upon the dishes. In an interview on January 23, 2023, Kristian Epa stated,



Paintings, murals, and traditional boats contribute to the transformation of the dining culture in Sentani. For example, a painting of fish along the wall of this restaurant gives diners a first-hand view of the traditional and cultural aspects of the types of fish present in the lake. Similarly, replicas of traditional boats create a unique atmosphere that is closely linked to our Sentani maritime heritage. Branding in food packaging or menus also plays a role in creating a strong identity for regional specialities.

Furthermore, we investigated how this intervention process encourages community participation and creates an environment in which art and gastronomy can coexist harmoniously. Kristian Epa explains:

The intervention process involves the community directly, either through involvement in the creation of the art itself or by gathering local ideas and stories. This creates a sense of belonging among the locals. In addition, the neighborhood around the eatery becomes increasingly attractive, creating a gathering place that is not only about food but also about local art and culture.

From the interview above, it can be inferred that the art intervention not only alters the physical appearance of the dining environment but also adds value to the local cultural identity and art. This creates a more immersive and engaging culinary experience for diners and enhances a sense of community among residents.



**Figure 9.** A Wooden Canoe on Display and Paintings of Eels, Prawns, and Fish from Sentani Lake at the Restaurant. *Source: Mambraku 2023*

### **Culinary arts as a cultural celebration**

Sentani culinary culture, reflecting the deep synergy between art and gastronomy, not only focuses on food but also serves as a cultural celebration. Each dish narrates a story about cultural significance, tradition, and innovation, contributing to the unique and dynamic local food landscape in Sentani.

Moreover, the culinary arts in Sentani reflect the synergy between art and gastronomy in the culinary culture in Sentani, reflecting a deep connection between art and gastronomy. It is not just about cooking food; more than that, culinary art is about creating experiences that blend aesthetics with taste. Sentani culinary culture not only focuses on food, but also serves as a cultural celebration, as it involves more than just cooking or eating dishes: Each dish tells a story and has cultural significance, tradition, and innovation. Thus, it can be said that the food in Sentani is not only to be enjoyed but to celebrate their cultural heritage. When asked, “How

does the contribution of each dish to Sentani culinary culture create a unique and dynamic food landscape?” In an interview on October 29, 2022, Lewi Puhili said:

...Every dish served, whether at home or in a restaurant, plays an important role in creating our local food landscape. Through the combination of cultural meaning, tradition, and innovation in each dish, we have succeeded in creating a unique and dynamic culinary wealth in Sentani. It’s not just about a variety of flavors; it’s also about preserving and celebrating our culinary heritage...

This is in line with Kristian Epa’s view:

...What I would like to add is that through the culinary arts, we not only bring flavors together but also embrace and celebrate the diversity of our cultures. The culinary arts of Sentani are a window into the beauty and complexity of our culture through every dish we serve...

Finally, the art in Sentani local cuisine profoundly influences these major findings. It underscores the importance of artistic expression in culinary presentations, the cultural significance of indigenous cuisine, the creative role of culinary artists, and the use of food as a marker of cultural identity. Additionally, these findings highlight the transformative impact of artistic interventions in shaping the local food culture in Sentani and cultural celebrations through the culinary arts.



**Figure 10.** Dining as a Cultural Celebration. *Source: Mambraku 2018*

## Discussion

Artistic expression in culinary presentation significantly impacts the dining experience, extending beyond just the taste. Dishes with visual aesthetics create multisensory experiences that influence taste perception and capture customer interest (Gumerman, 1997). A beautiful visual design not only enhances the temptation of dishes but raises expectations and satisfaction with eating. Culinary arts go beyond altering the appearance of food; through an emphasis on black, intricate coatings for simultaneously pressed fish and vegetables and creative embellishment, culinary art introduces a new dimension to culinary rationality. By uniting aesthetics and taste, culinary art permeates the deeper meaning of each dish, transforming the dining experience into a satisfying journey for the senses and mind.

Maintaining the traditional heritage and cultural values of a community requires the active preservation of culture through food. In the context of the Sentani, local cuisine plays a central role in this endeavor by preserving traditions and cultural values passed down from generation to generation (Swadling P.; Wagner, 2019). The main bridge in maintaining cultural roots is

the utilization of traditional recipes and cooking techniques passed down through the generations. By employing unique local ingredients and cooking methods inherited over time, Sentani food not only serves as a dish but also acts as an heir to noble values, symbolically perpetuating local stories and history. Thus, Sentani local cuisine not only showcases culinary delights but also functions as an effective tool for cultural preservation, integrating cultural heritage into people's daily lives and ensuring its continuity and relevance in changing times.

The role of innovation in local cuisine, particularly the contribution of Sentani women as innovators, prompts essential questions about how these innovations actively shape and influence the culinary sustainability of the region. Sentani women have frequently pioneered the creation of new variants and the incorporation of creative elements into traditional cuisine. However, challenges emerge when attempting to align with global trends without compromising cultural authenticity. Addressing these issues requires a profound understanding of how innovation can be judiciously integrated to uphold local cultural roots. With the right strategy, innovation in local cuisine can fortify cultural identity, attract global consumers, and ultimately bolster the sustainable growth of the local culinary industry (Busse, 2019).

Sentani local cuisine serves as a marker of a robust cultural identity for the people of Sentani. Traditional dishes like papeda and black fish soup not only showcase the richness of distinctive flavors and aromas but function as tangible symbols of the cultural heritage transmitted from generation to generation. By utilizing local ingredients and cooking techniques passed down through the generations, the Sentani not only impart taste but convey history and cultural values (Parsons, 2016). Its significance lies in its capacity to reinforce a sense of belonging among the Sentani people. Sentani local cuisine has emerged as a potent tool for eliciting pride in their cultural identity, forging a profound emotional connection with their ancestral heritage, and establishing a platform for the expression and preservation of a unique cultural identity. Through their local cuisine, the people of Sentani not only serve delectable dishes but actively celebrate and nurture their cultural roots with pride.

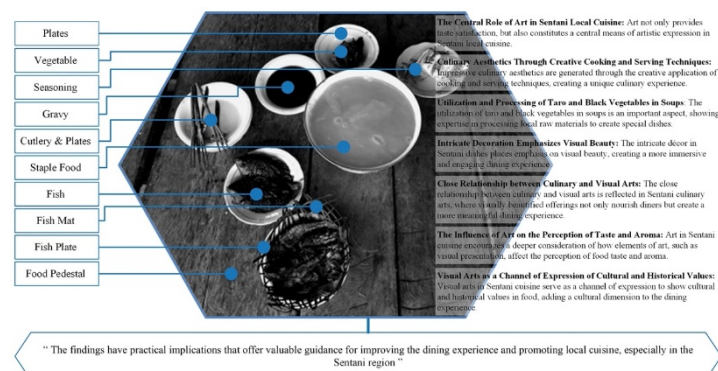
By providing an in-depth understanding of its positive impact, artistic intervention plays a central role in Sentani's local eating culture. Urban gardening, community murals/paintings, and restaurant branding actively promote local food, change people's perspectives on local culinary diversity, and increase their participation (Poe, 2001). By incorporating artistic aspects into food culture, these interventions not only create a visual aesthetic but also generate an atmosphere that stimulates a sense of local pride. Furthermore, the success of this model may inspire other regions to adopt similar strategies to promote and preserve their local eating culture.

In the context of the Sentani, the culinary arts play a central role, highlighting the importance of each dish. Each dish not only presents delicious flavors but narrates stories of tradition, cultural significance, and innovation. By combining traditional recipes with creative touches, Sentani cuisine become a vehicle for celebrating the richness of its ethnic culture. Every roll of papeda creates an immersive culinary experience, strengthening people's ties to their cultural heritage and evoking a sense of pride in cultural identity. Sentani local food is thus not merely a set of dishes; it is a celebration of a culture that continues to live and thrive through the culinary arts.

### **Implications**

These findings have practical implications that offer valuable guidance for improving dining experiences and promoting the local cuisine, especially in the Sentani region. Restaurants can enhance their presentation of local dishes by actively emphasizing artistic

expression and cultural values. In addition, collaborating with local women as culinary artists allows for the creation of innovative dishes rooted in tradition. Employing promotional strategies that highlight culinary arts aspects, involve local communities, and incorporate artistic interventions like murals, branding, and technology has proven to be an effective approach to boosting the appeal and visibility of local cuisine. More broadly, efforts to preserve culture through culinary practices in Sentani can contribute to culinary tourism by attracting tourists eager to explore cultural richness through taste and culinary arts. By integrating the elements of culture and culinary creativity, this region can position itself as a premier destination, offering authentic culinary experiences intertwined with the beauty of local art.



**Figure 11.** Discussion Results Chart. *Source: Mambraku 2024*

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how art profoundly shapes Sentani cuisine through artistic expression, cultural symbolism, culinary innovation, and food as a heritage marker, reinforcing cultural identity while driving sustainable development and local economic growth. The vibrant celebration of Sentani culture through cuisine underscores the need to preserve this heritage, with future research directions including the intersection of culinary arts and tourism marketing, the socio-economic effects of artistic interventions on communities, and comparative studies on Indigenous food traditions. Additionally, exploring digital storytelling and immersive technologies (e.g., AR/VR) could modernize cultural transmission, enhance global appreciation, and ensure the authenticity and sustainability of Sentani culinary heritage for future generations.

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