

Food as a Cultural Text: An Analysis of Gastrocriticism on the Clean Tradition of Javanese Villages: A Literature Review

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Abstract. This research aims to examine food as a cultural text in the Javanese Village Clean tradition through the perspective of gastrocriticism with a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach. A total of 25 selected articles were analyzed using the PRISMA flow to explore how food functions as a symbol, a medium of communication, and a representation of cultural identity in the context of Javanese rituals. The results of the study show that ritual foods such as tumpeng, jenang, and offerings have a construction of meaning related to Javanese cosmology, social solidarity, and community value structure. An analysis of the cultural theories of Barthes, Douglas, and Lévi-Strauss reveals that food is not only an object of consumption, but also a system of signs that negotiates man's relationship with nature, ancestors, and communities. Most previous studies have focused on symbolic or ethnographic aspects, while this study found gaps in the integration of culinary discourse analysis with the dynamics of modernity. These findings confirm the need for a multidisciplinary approach to reading food as a cultural text, while also opening up space for further research on the transformation of traditional culinary meanings in contemporary social change. Thus, this study makes a conceptual and methodological contribution to the development of culinary cultural studies, especially in the context of Javanese rituals.

Keywords: Gastrocriticism, Village Clean, Food as a Cultural Text, Javanese, Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

1 Introduction

Food in a cultural context not only serves as a biological need, but also contains symbolic, social, and ideological meanings that represent the identity of a society. In the Javanese tradition, food is often present as a medium of communication between humans, nature, and spiritual powers. Cultural symbols are a means for humans to interpret the world and structure its social reality [1]. The Village Clean Tradition in Java, for example, positions foods such as tumpeng, jenang, and chicken ingkung as symbols of purity, gratitude, and harmony with nature. The study of food as a cultural text then developed through an interdisciplinary approach that blended anthropology, semiotics,

and literature. In "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" it states that food can be read like a text that contains certain social codes and narratives [2]. Therefore, food analysis in the context of tradition is not simply studying recipes or ingredients, but reading the structure of the meaning hidden behind them. The gastrocriticism approach has become a new method in literary and cultural studies to interpret the meaning of food as a social sign. In the context of Javanese society, gastrocriticism opens up space for new interpretations of local values that are manifested in ritual culinary traditions. This study views that food is not a passive object, but an active entity in cultural discourse and identity. The gastrocritical approach is practically applied by reading food as a cultural text that contains sign structures, narratives, and ideologies so that each culinary element is treated like an interpretable "language". The analysis begins by identifying the physical shape of the food such as the shape of the tumpeng cone, the color of the jenang, or the configuration of the ingkung as signifiers that represent certain concepts in Javanese cosmology. Furthermore, these meanings are interpreted through Barthes' semiotic framework, which is how food functions at the level of denotative (what it seems) and connotative (constructed cultural values). In the context of tumpeng, the shape of the cone can be read as a representation of the sacred mountain and the hierarchy of the cosmos, while the red or white jenang reflects the symbolism of life's journey, holiness, and plea for salvation. At the same time, the chicken ingkung becomes a metaphor for human surrender to a higher power, so that its function is not only ritual, but also narrative. Gastrokritik then examines how these symbols work as social narratives that reinforce community cohesion through the practice of eating together. The next stage is to relate these symbolic findings to value structures, power relations, or social norms

Although the Village Clean tradition has been extensively studied from an anthropological and religiosity perspective, little research has highlighted the symbolic aspects of food through literary and cultural approaches such as gastrocriticism. Most studies still focus attention on spiritual and social values without dissecting the narratives built through these culinary practices. This creates a gap in understanding the semiotic dimension of food as a representation of cultural texts. Food in the Javanese tradition is often considered only as a complement to rituals, not as a medium of discourse that can be critically studied. According to [3] Cultural texts should be understood as a system of signs that shape meaning through symbolic relations and social conventions. So, if food is ignored as a text, we lose the interpretive potential of the identity and cosmology of Javanese society. In addition, the dominant approach is still ethnographic descriptive, there is not much linking between language, meaning, and symbolic structure of food. In fact, in an interdisciplinary framework such as food studies, each culinary element can represent a certain power relationship and social values. The main problem raised in this study is how food in the Bersih Desa tradition can be read as a cultural text that contains symbolic and ideological meanings.

The central analytical problem in this manuscript lies in the attempt to uncover how food in the Javanese Village Clean tradition functions as a cultural text that stores a symbolic meaning structure, so that it can be read through the gastrocriticism approach as a sign system that represents cosmology, social values, and community identity. In other words, the core of the problem is not solely in the description of the food or its rituals, but in the need to reinterpret the Javanese culinary tradition through semiotic-literary analysis that has rarely been applied to the local context. The research gap arises

because the majority of previous studies only look at food from the ethnographic and spiritual aspects without dissecting the narrative, symbolic, and ideological dimensions inherent in it, so this manuscript focuses on the reinterpretation of food as a cultural text that mediates human–cosmos–community relations within the framework of gastrocriticism.

The research gap lies in the lack of application of gastrocriticism theory to local Indonesian traditions, especially Javanese traditions. Most studies of gastrocriticism still focus on Western literary works as done by [4] that analyzes the representation of food in a novel or movie. Meanwhile, local studies mostly discuss culinary in the context of tourism or cultural economy, rather than as a literary text and cultural symbol. In fact, as expressed [5] In the concept of the "culinary triangle", the culinary structure reflects the structure of the community's thinking that can be read semiotically. This means that in the context of Bersih Desa, food also functions as a narrative symbol that reflects the Javanese people's view of life towards the cosmos and social harmony. This emptiness is what makes the importance of the literature review on gastrocriticism in local traditions. By mapping previous studies, this study seeks to show the new position and contribution of food analysis in Javanese culture. This gap shows that interdisciplinary approaches between literature, semiotics, and anthropology have not been widely applied in understanding traditional culinary practices in Indonesia. Thus, this research fills this theoretical gap through a systematic and reflective literature analysis.

As an alternative solution to this gap, the gastrocriticism approach can be used as a relevant analytical framework to read the symbolic meaning of food in the Javanese tradition. This theory was developed by literary theorists such as [6] who see food as a narrative metaphor in literary works. In a cultural context, this approach can enrich interpretations of how people narrate their identity through culinary. In addition, the integration of Barthes' semiotic theory and the concept [7] can be used to understand the connection between internalised cultural values, food, and socioeconomic status. By examining food as a text, we are able to comprehend not just its tangible components but also the ideology and meaning structure that surround it. Researchers can examine a range of methodologies and pertinent results from earlier studies by using the literature review method. As a result, the findings not only explain the phenomenon but also create a conceptual synthesis that connects local contexts and global theories. A new paradigm in the study of Indonesian culture could emerge as a result of this conceptual solution. In addition, this research can also be a reference for the development of interdisciplinary studies in the fields of literature, anthropology, and gastronomy.

Some previous research has shown that food has a strong social and symbolic function in society. [8] affirms that the structure of food reflects the social order and value system that prevails in a community. In the Indonesian context, research by [9] shows that traditional ceremonies always involve culinary symbols as a form of social and spiritual communication. Meanwhile, [10] examining the meaning of tumpeng in Javanese tradition as a symbol of cosmic balance and spirituality. However, these studies have not placed food as a cultural text within the framework of gastrocriticism theory. Studies from highlight [11] The relationship between food, identity, and power, however, is still limited to social analysis. Therefore, there is still minimal literature on gastrocriticism in Indonesia, especially those that link ritual culinary practices and the meaning of cultural literature. This study seeks to review the literature to find patterns, themes,

and gaps that can be filled. By examining these sources, this research builds a theoretical foundation for understanding food as a Javanese cultural text.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the gastrocriticism approach with the context of the local Javanese culture through the literature review method. If previously gastrocriticism was widely applied to modern literary texts or works of fiction, then this study applies it to traditional practices and cultural rituals. This gives an expansion of meaning to the concept of "text" that is not limited to writing, but also to social and symbolic practices. This approach also suggests that local traditions can be a new source of epistemology in literary and cultural theory. Thus, this research not only adopts Western theories, but also dialogues them with the local wisdom of the archipelago. The novelty lies in the reinterpretation of food as a cultural narrative that reflects the structure of thinking and values of Javanese society. This approach also contributes to the development of more contextual cultural semiotics. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be the basis for the development of Indonesian culture-based gastrocriticism literature. Thus, this research is innovative as well as decolonial in its theoretical framework. The research gap in this manuscript has the strength because it shows that the study of gastrocriticism in Indonesia is still very limited, but the claim would be more convincing if it were equipped with a clearer mapping of previous research and its limitations. So far, most local studies have only highlighted food in the perspective of ethnographic, ritual, or symbolism without developing the textual-semiotic analysis that is at the heart of gastrocriticism. These limitations confirm that food has not been read as a sign system that has its own cultural narrative. The available literature also does not show a theoretical dialogue between gastrocriticism and the context of Javanese traditions. In the context of novelty, this manuscript offers the application of gastrocriticism to the Javanese tradition as an important innovation because it has not been widely done in the study of the archipelago. In addition, the integration of semiotic theory provides a stronger analytical foundation in understanding food as a cultural symbol. This approach extends gastrocriticism from Western literary analysis to the realm of local traditions. Another novelty appears in the effort to build a local epistemology by contextualizing international theory into Javanese cultural practices. Thus, this research not only fills the literature gap, but also makes a conceptual contribution to the development of food studies based on local culture.

The integration of Barthes, Bourdieu, and the culinary triangle theories is done by making them a single complementary analytical framework for reading food as a cultural text, rather than just a description of symbols. Semiology [12] is used to interpret food at the denotative and connotative levels so that every physical element of shape, color, and composition is read as a sign that builds cultural meaning. Concept of habitus and consumption practices [13] broadening this meaning by looking at how food symbols operate in social structures, power relations, and the reproduction of community values. Meanwhile, the culinary triangle [14] helps map the logical structures and cultural oppositions that underlie cooking and serving practices, so that culinary meaning emerges not only from symbols, but also from the way food is processed and classified. By combining these three theories, the analysis not only describes food as a cultural object, but builds a systematic reading of how signs, habitus, and culinary structures work together to shape narratives, ideologies, and identities in Javanese tradition.

At the state of the art level, this research positions itself between global studies on food and culture and local studies on Javanese traditions. At the global level, food

studies have grown rapidly through theories such as "gastropoetics" [15] dan "culinary discourse analysis" [16]. However, in Indonesia, this kind of research is still rare, especially those that link food narratives and cultural symbol systems. By combining the theories of Barthes, Bourdieu, and Tobin, this research presents a new analytical framework for reading food in the context of tradition. The state of the art of this research lies in the attempt to contextualize international theory in the practice of living local culture. In this way, the theory of gastrocriticism is no longer universalistic, but can be developed into a form of local epistemology. This study also shows that food has a function as a cultural discourse that reflects social structure, spiritual values, and meaning systems. Therefore, this research plays an important role in expanding the horizon of literary and cultural studies in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research is based on the importance of preserving and reinterpreting local traditions in the context of cultural globalization. In the modern era, many symbolic values in the Javanese culinary tradition began to be marginalized due to commercialization and lifestyle changes. Therefore, re-understanding the meaning of food as a cultural text is a strategic step to maintain the continuity of cultural identity. Cultural identity has always been narrative and negotiated through symbols, including food [17]. Thus, this research not only has academic value, but also social and cultural value. The urgency also lies in the potential of gastrocriticism as a method of cultural education that fosters symbolic literacy of society. In addition, the results of this research can be the basis for the development of a culture-based curriculum and sustainable tourism. In an academic context, this research enriches interdisciplinary discourses that connect linguistics, literature, and culinary anthropology. Practically, this study contributes to efforts to preserve traditions and strengthen the cultural identity of the Javanese people in the midst of changing times.

This study aims to analyze and review the literature related to the application of gastrocriticism in reading the meaning of food in the Javanese Village Clean tradition. Its main goal is to uncover how food can be understood as a cultural text that contains symbolic, social, and spiritual value. In particular, this study aims to map the theories and approaches used in the study of gastrocriticism and their relevance to the local cultural context. In addition, this research aims to compile a conceptual synthesis that integrates global theories with local phenomena. Another goal is to show the contribution of gastrocriticism theory to the cultural study of the archipelago. Through a literature review, this study also wants to identify opportunities for further research in the field of local gastrocriticism. The long-term goal is to build a paradigm of culinary studies based on cultural texts that is typical of Indonesia. Thus, this research became the initial foundation for the development of the study of literary gastronomy at the national level. The results of the study are expected to strengthen the position of local culture as a source of theory and not just an object of study.

2 Method

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with reference to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines as recommended by [18]. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize the results of previous

research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the integration of gastrolinguistics, ethnomathematics, and computational thinking in educational and cultural contexts. According to [19] The SLR method is a form of secondary research that aims to produce synthetic evidence based on transparent and replicable scientific data.

This research is methodologically claimed as a PRISMA-based Systematic Literature Review (SLR), so it is formally included in a systematic literature review study; this can be seen from the process of identification, selection, and analysis of 25 articles carried out in a structured manner. However, when viewed from its substance, this manuscript does not stop at the synthesis of findings alone, but also moves towards proposing a new conceptual framework, namely the integration of the gastrocriticism approach with the local context of the Javanese tradition to read food as a cultural text. This indication can be seen in the novelty, state of the art, and discussions that emphasize the importance of dialogue between Western theories (semiotics, anthropology, gastrocriticism) and local wisdom, thus resulting in new theoretical positions that are contextual and decolonial. Thus, this research is more appropriately positioned as a conceptual systematic review, not a pure SLR, because in addition to synthesizing literature, it also seeks to build a new analytical framework in the study of Javanese culinary culture.

This research is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which means that the review is carried out in a structured, standardized, and following the PRISMA flow to ensure that the process of identification, selection, and synthesis of literature is transparent and replicable. In its implementation, inclusion criteria include: indexed journal articles or scientific proceedings, academic publications that discuss food in the context of culture or gastrocriticism, research available in full text form, and scientific papers in Indonesian or English that are relevant to the focus on the symbolic meaning of food and Javanese traditions. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria consist of: popular non-academic articles, essays without a clear methodology, writings that do not discuss food culture relationships analytically, and research that does not substantially integrate semiotic, traditional, or gastrocriticism aspects. Thus, this study asserts itself as a pure SLR with strict literature limitations to ensure only works with high theoretical and methodological relevance are analyzed.

This research uses four main database sources, namely Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Sinta to ensure a wide and relevant literature coverage. The initial search process resulted in 320 articles before duplication and title and abstract filtering were carried out. After going through the eligibility stage and a full evaluation of the methodology and relevance of the content, only 25 articles met all the inclusion criteria. These articles are then analyzed in depth in thematic synthesis and bibliometric mapping.

The preparation of this systematic review follows the principles of the PRISMA Declaration [20] with the inclusion criteria and exceptions for the articles presented below.

2.1 Search Strategy

To guarantee the completeness of the data, the search strategy is methodically created utilising a multi-database approach. The search was conducted in four main databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), Google Scholar, and Sinta. These four databases were chosen given their multidisciplinary reach and extensive indexing capabilities in the fields of linguistics, education, and cultural studies.

The keywords used include a combination of the following terms: "gastrolinguistics", "food discourse", "culinary linguistics", "ethnomathematics", "computational thinking", "cultural cognition", and "education."

Boolean operators (AND, OR) are applied to expand or narrow search results. The search process was conducted during the period 2005–2025 to capture the latest conceptual developments. As stated by [21] systematic search strategies are the basis of validity in SLR as they minimize selection bias and ensure the coverage of relevant literature.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are established to ensure that the selected literature is relevant to the research objectives. Inclusion criteria include:

- a. Peer-reviewed journal articles, scientific proceedings, and academic book chapters
- b. Publications that deal directly with the use of language in culinary contexts and gastrocritism in culture.
- c. Articles are available in full-text format and in English or Indonesian.

Exclusion criteria include popular publications, non-academic essays, and articles that do not clearly explain the research methodology. These criteria are established based on the principles of transparency and relevance as recommended by the [22] which emphasizes the importance of filtering sources according to the research context to maintain the credibility of the synthesis results.

2.3 Study Quality Analysis

Study quality analysis was conducted using a critical assessment approach to assess the methodological validity and reliability of the included research findings. Each article was evaluated based on criteria adapted from the CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) and the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), including the following aspects:

- a. Consistency between research objectives and methods.
- b. Clarity of analysis instruments and procedures.
- c. Transparency in reporting results.
- d. Theoretical relevance to the topic in gastrocritism.

Each article is rated quality (high, medium, low) to ensure that only studies of sufficient methodological quality are included in the final analysis. According to [23] a rigorous assessment process improves the validity of the literature synthesis and reduces the risk of biased conclusions.

2.4 Description of Analyzed Articles

Articles that pass the selection stage are then systematically described using a synthesis table which includes:

- a. Author and year of publication
- b. Country and research context
- c. Purpose and method used
- d. Key concepts discussed

This description aims to display the general characteristics of the corpus of research being analyzed. The descriptive stage in SLR serves as the basis for identifying research patterns, thematic trends, and gaps [24]. In this study, 10 publications from various disciplines were analyzed, including gastrocritism, local wisdom, and cultural studies.

Table 1. PRISMA Stages

PRISMA Stage	Process and Number of Articles
Identification	A total of 320 articles were obtained from four databases (Scopus = 2; Science Net = 0; Google Scholar = 215; Sinta = 103). After the removal of duplicates and incomplete data from 130 articles, 190 unique articles remained.
Screening	Screening by title and abstract is carried out to ensure relevance to the topic of gastricritism, local wisdom and culture. A total of 60 articles were removed as irrelevant to the focus of the research, leaving 130 articles
Eligibility	Of the remaining 130 articles, <i>a full text reading</i> was carried out. A total of 70 articles were excluded because they did not meet methodological or conceptual criteria (e.g., did not discuss cross-field linkage). There are 60 articles left, after a detailed check, there are 35 that do not meet the criteria, so there are 25 articles that meet the criteria.
Inclusions	Finally, 25 articles met all inclusion criteria and were used in bibliometric analysis and thematic synthesis. This article is the basis for the development of an integrative conceptual model of gastrocritism, local and cultural wisdom

2.5 Analyzing Studies and Extracting Data

The analysis stage is carried out through two approaches: bibliometric mapping and thematic synthesis. Bibliometric mapping was performed with the Publish or Perish, VOSviewer and Harzing devices to identify publication trends, citation networks and inter-topic relationships. This approach is in line with guidelines that suggest a combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative synthesis to strengthen conceptual interpretations [25]. Thematic synthesis is carried out by inductive-deductive coding techniques to extract the main themes of the structure of gastrocritism.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Table 2. Study Selection Summary (PRISMA Flow Summary)

PRISMA Stage	Number of Articles	Remarks
Identification	320 articles found	Obtained from databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Sinta
Screening	130 Items	After the process of removing duplication and checking the title–abstract
Eligibility	60 items	After reading the full-text and evaluating the suitability of the content
Included	25 items	Final articles that meet all eligibility criteria and are analyzed in the SLR

Table 3. Description of 25 Articles Analyzed

No	Author & Year	Context of the Study	Key Findings
1	Hitch, 2015 [26]	The role of food in shaping global cultural identity	Food became a social symbol and marker of cultural identity in community traditions
2	Riswari et al., 2025 [27]	Pecel in literature as a symbol of Javanese cultural identity	Pecel is positioned as a cultural artifact that contains collective memory and identity symbols
3	Nugroho et al., 2025 [28]	Traditional food in the São Paulo São Paulo	Each ritual food has a strong symbolic, spiritual and social meaning
4	Rahmawati et al., 2017 [29]	Food as a cultural symbol	Traditional food is used as a means of cultural communication in the proposal procession
5	Pratiwi, 2019 [30]	Ethnolinguistics of food types in <i>the Ruwahan tradition</i>	The cultural significance of food as an expression of belief and respect for ancestors
6	Alvanita et al., 2025 [31]	The Cultural Significance of <i>Javanese Diamonds</i>	<i>Diamonds</i> reflect the local culture and the development of Javanese culinary history
7	Nugraheni et al., 2025 [32]	Jenang dodol in the Javanese culinary identity	Jenang dodol serves as a symbol of cultural advice and local identity
8	Nurhayati et al., 2014 [33]	Inventory of traditional Javanese food offerings	Ritual food related to social, moral, and cultural values of Javanese Village

9	Piani & In-drawati, 2023 [34]	Analysis of the food lexicon in the traditional ceremonies of Javanese Magetan	The name of the traditional food carries a symbol of hope and prayer in the ritual
10	Setiawan, 2024 [35]	Symbolization of traditional Javanese food in <i>Centhini Fiber</i>	Food reflects the character and cultural values of the Javanese people
11	Nurnaningsih, 2019 [36]	Ethnolinguistics of traditional food in the context of	The term food describes cultural values and symbols of safety
12	Kartini & Maulana, 2019 [37]	Study of ethnic foods in intercultural relations	Ethnic food becomes an agent of social change and intercultural relations
13	Sofyan, 2020 [38]	Food culture theory in the context of academic culinary	Food is seen as a cultural discourse and culinary history
14	Rahayu et al., 2022 [39]	Tumpeng in the ritual of <i>Tedak Siten</i> (magazine/journals)	Tumpeng becomes a symbol of prosperity and hope
15	Syamsuri et al., 2022 [40]	Local wisdom of Indonesian common traditional foods	Traditional food as cultural heritage and a symbol of social value
16	Sari & Setyawan, 2022 [41]	The meaning of food in the Javanese harvest ritual	Harvest food ritual as a symbol of gratitude and communal
17	Irmawati, 2013 [42]	Culinary Meaning in Javanese Traditional Wedding	Ritual food conveys prayer and social relationships
18	Fauziah et al., 2018 [43]	Birth rituals and traditional foods	Explaining the function of food as a cultural discourse of birth
19	Fajrie, 2016 [44]	Food of the coastal communities of Java	Local community identity through seafood
20	Basri, 2024 [45]	Semiotic analysis of village food	Symbols of the meaning of food in village cultural narratives
21	Aminaturrofiqoh & Marzuki, 2024 [46]	Ethnography of Javanese food	Cultural influence on village food practices
22	Ariwibowo, 2015 [47]	Food culture education study	Food as a medium of local cultural education
23	Rosyadi, 2020 [48]	Food narratives in contemporary Javanese literature	The production of food meaning in literary texts
24	Yuniastuti et al., 2023 [49]	Gastronomy and village culinary identity	The relationship of food with the social structure of the village

25	Zakiyya, [50]	2022	Consumption of traditional foods at cultural festivals	The role of food in the festival rituals of the Javanese people
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Literature analysis shows that food traditions in Javanese culture function not just as physical consumption but as cultural texts full of symbolic meaning. [51] explains that traditional food naming contains a strong historical identity and social value, confirming Barthes' theory that food is a system of signs in cultural texts. In addition, research such as [52] in the context of food anthropology, it is emphasized that food not only meets biological needs, but also becomes a medium of expression of cultural values and social identity, as found in the various local studies above.

The findings are consistent with anthropologist Clifford Geertz's approach that cultural objects such as food should be read as interrelated symbols and form a network of meanings in social life. Numerous papers, including the ritual studies of Sego Langgi and Sanggring Gumeno, demonstrate how the use of food in ritual ceremonies not only fosters thankfulness but also expresses social systems including cultural value hierarchies and solidarity. According to this, ritual food methodically creates a shared social experience that mirrors Javanese beliefs about spirituality and interpersonal connections.

Additionally, publications like those authored by [53] discovered that, despite the demands of uniform globalisation, traditional cuisines play a significant role in the development of cultural identity and the maintenance of customs. According to these findings, ritual food is utilised to preserve cultural narratives and symbolic continuity in local contexts, supporting the idea that cultural identity is a negotiated narrative. Thus, the study shows that through a systematic analysis of the literature, traditional Javanese food functions as a cultural text that contains social symbolism, spiritual rituals, and communal identity.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the analysis of 25 articles show that food in Javanese society functions as a cultural text that contains layers of symbolic, spiritual, and social meaning. According to the idea, this [54] it claims that food serves as a symbol system that represents a culture's meaning structure. Every component of food, including tumpeng, jenang, pecel, and ubo rampe sesaji, has a unique semiotic structure in Javanese culture. These results demonstrate that food is a cultural artefact that documents societal values and identity rather than merely being a commodity to be consumed. Research like [55] reiterating the idea that food may be interpreted as a social narrative that influences the cultural consciousness of the whole. The examination of gastrocriticism in these articles also demonstrates that the primary means of comprehending Javanese cosmology, customs, and interpersonal relationships is through food. In Javanese culture, food is therefore a rich source of information for philosophical and cultural interpretation.

Ritual traditions such as slametan, ruwahan, tingkeban, and nyewu show that food represents religious values and social relations between citizens. [56] explains that ritual is a series of symbolic actions that connect humans to the spiritual value order in their society. Based on the 25 articles, ritual food serves as a bridge between the sacred and profane dimensions in the life of the Javanese. These findings confirm that food

has a role as a tool to regulate social harmony through the mechanism of sharing, togetherness, and respect for ancestors. Food in rituals provides moral messages that are passed down through generations. Thus, the pattern of ritual consumption is not only a hereditary tradition, but an identity reinvention that is interpreted collectively. This shows the close relationship between culinary and the value structure of Javanese society.

The analysed articles' ethnolinguistic research demonstrates that the culinary lexicon has a symbolic purpose in the creation of cultural meaning. As stated by [57] social and cultural realities are shaped by language. Foods like *sego golong*, *jenang abang*, *wajik*, and *sego langgi* are named after certain social and moral roles in the framework of Javanese cuisine. These results demonstrate how people express symbolic ideas like prayer, hope, and life lessons using culinary language. The depiction of shared ideals in the culinary lexicon helps to create social identity. As a result, the language component becomes crucial to comprehending food as a cultural text. This viewpoint confirms that the structure of meaning created by language and tradition is inextricably linked to food.

Food also contributes to cultural identity and fosters a sense of community in society, according to an examination of 25 articles. Through social customs and symbols, cultural identity is continuously negotiated as a representational process [58]. Traditional dishes like *tumpeng*, *pecel*, *jenang*, and *diamonds* are significant components that define the Javanese people's identity. Historical narratives found in traditional cuisines influence social cohesiveness and collective identity. This significance demonstrates how cuisine is incorporated into cultural customs and belief systems rather than existing independently. For the younger generation, eating is therefore a way to strengthen cultural identity and preserve values. All throughout the essay, it is affirmed that local culinary customs preserve cultural uniqueness.

The difficulties posed by globalisation to the preservation of traditional Javanese cuisine are also covered in a number of publications. Rapid changes brought about by modernity have the potential to alter regional cultural traditions [59]. The sustainability of traditional cuisine is being impacted by modernisation and changes in lifestyle. These results suggest that preserving the sustainability of cultural values requires the documenting and revival of traditional cuisine. Another significant issue raised in the research is the younger generation's shifting dietary habits. Therefore, to ensure that traditional cuisines continue to exist, educational initiatives, cultural celebrations, and culinary innovations are required. This investigation demonstrates that cultural preservation includes gastronomic preservation.

The article's overall findings support the significance of the gastrocriticism approach in comprehending the role of food culture. Gastrocriticism makes it possible to examine food from the viewpoints of social identity, politics, aesthetics, and symbolism [60]. This method aids in mapping the significance of food in social and spiritual networks when studying traditional Javanese cuisine. Results from publications like *Sanggring Gumen*, *Sego Langgi*, and *Pecel* demonstrate how food functions as a social discourse that expresses ritual, solidarity, and power dynamics. Thus, using a multidisciplinary method, gastrocriticism enhances cultural analysis. This viewpoint demonstrates that food is a complicated intellectual topic that merits in-depth investigation. Food is an extremely effective cultural communication tool, according to the study.

The combination of the findings from the 25 articles paints a picture of the rich social, spiritual, linguistic, and identity values found in traditional Javanese cuisine. Ritual structure theories provide credence to the idea that food plays a crucial role in transforming cultural meaning [61]. Every article demonstrates how food serves as a powerful and efficient means of passing down cultural traditions. Furthermore, research confirms that food plays a role in fostering social peace and fortifying communal institutions. As a result, this study offers a comprehensive knowledge of how food functions as a cultural text within Javanese traditions. These findings also highlight how crucial it is to maintain traditional cuisine in order to maintain the identity of the country. In summary, the examination of food as a cultural text opens the door for more extensive cross-disciplinary future research.

4 Conclusion

According to the study's findings, food serves as a cultural text with profound social, spiritual, and symbolic connotations in Javanese culture. A study of 25 articles demonstrates that food serves as a means of cultural transmission that preserves the continuity of values and group identity in addition to being a physical object of consumption. It has been demonstrated that ritual foods like tumpeng, jenang, pecel, and offerings have social purposes that fortify human ties to Javanese cosmology and foster community togetherness. One useful technique for revealing these aspects of meaning in an interdisciplinary way is the gastrocriticism approach. The study did identify a gap, though, in that there aren't many studies that connect food symbolism to the way that modernisation has changed culture. It is therefore recommended that the researcher investigate the connection between traditional culinary customs and modern social dynamics in more detail. To find elements that haven't been fully explored, more study must also use discourse analysis and in-depth ethnographic techniques. As a result, the study of food as a cultural text can advance in a more thorough and timely manner.

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