



**THE ROLE OF BUSINESS ACTOR IN CHINA'S
GASTRODIPLOMACY IN INDONESIA: THE CASE
STUDY OF SUJI SUAN CAI YU (2020-2025)**

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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By

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ABSTRACT

Gastrodiplomacy is the act of diplomacy where food plays a role as the main tool in attracting foreign publics. China, as a global economic and cultural powerhouse, has actively pursued soft power initiatives, including gastrodiplomacy. However, in its implementation and studies available, it is shown that China's gastrodiplomacy is a lack of government involvement and initiatives. Even though China's gastrodiplomacy remains largely unstructured, the role of non-state actors, including restaurants overseas, is predicted to have a contribution to the growth of China's soft power implementation. Thus, this study aims to analyze the role of a Chinese Sichuan restaurant, SUJI Suan Cai Yu, in its contribution to China's gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia. Using qualitative research methods that include library research, interviews, surveys, and observation, this study explores the Chinese culture that is attached to SUJI Suan Cai Yu's business operation and its impacts on its consumers—Indonesian people. The findings highlight that, based on the concept of China's public diplomacy and scholars' views on non-state actors' status in public diplomacy, SUJI Suan Cai Yu cannot be categorized as a non-state actor and part of China's gastrodiplomacy. However, indirectly, a significant impact resulted from its business operations, such as the rise of Chinese cultural awareness and tourism potential to China within its consumers. This evidence underlines the role and contributions of SUJI Suan Cai Yu, resulting in just an ordinary Chinese cultural diffusion under the smart soft power utilization. This case study underscores the potential of China's soft power resources utilization, especially its culture, such as through gastrodiplomacy, to achieve China's national interest.

Keywords: China, gastrodiplomacy, Chinese cuisine, Sichuan, SUJI Suan Cai Yu.

ABSTRAK

Gastrodiplomasi adalah tindakan diplomasi di mana makanan berperan sebagai alat utama dalam menarik perhatian publik asing. Cina, sebagai kekuatan ekonomi dan budaya global, telah secara aktif mengejar inisiatif kekuatan lunak, termasuk gastrodiplomasi. Namun, dalam pelaksanaannya dan studi yang tersedia, terlihat bahwa gastrodiplomasi Cina kurang akan keterlibatan dan inisiatif pemerintah. Meskipun gastrodiplomasi Cina masih sebagian besar tidak terstruktur, peran aktor non-negara, termasuk restoran di luar negeri, diprediksi berkontribusi terhadap pertumbuhan implementasi kekuatan lunak Cina. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran sebuah restoran Sichuan, SUJI Suan Cai Yu, dalam kontribusinya terhadap gastrodiplomasi Cina di Indonesia. Menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif yang mencakup penelitian pustaka, wawancara, survei, dan observasi, studi ini mengeksplorasi budaya Cina yang melekat pada operasi bisnis SUJI Suan Cai Yu dan dampaknya terhadap konsumennya—masyarakat Indonesia. Temuan ini menyoroti bahwa, berdasarkan konsep diplomasi publik Cina dan pandangan para ahli tentang status aktor non-negara dalam diplomasi publik, SUJI Suan Cai Yu tidak dapat dikategorikan sebagai aktor non-negara dan bagian dari gastrodiplomasi Cina. Namun, secara tidak langsung, dampak signifikan dihasilkan dari operasi bisnisnya, seperti meningkatnya kesadaran budaya Cina dan potensi pariwisata ke Cina di kalangan konsumennya. Bukti ini menekankan peran dan kontribusi SUJI Suan Cai Yu, sebatas menghasilkan difusi budaya Cina di bawah pemanfaatan kekuatan lunak yang cerdas. Studi kasus ini menekankan potensi pemanfaatan sumber daya kekuatan lunak Cina, terutama budayanya, seperti melalui gastrodiplomasi, untuk mencapai kepentingan nasional Cina.

Kata kunci: Cina, gastrodiplomasi, masakan Cina, Sichuan, SUJI Suan Cai Yu.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PANEL OF EXAMINER APPROVAL	i
STATEMENT OF ORIGINITY	ii
SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION APPROVAL	iii
ADVISOR'S APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION	iv
TURNITIN CHECK RESULTS	v
AI TURNITIN REPORT	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
ABSTRAK	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
I.1. Background of the Study	1
I.2. Literature Review	5
I.2.1. Public Diplomacy	5
I.2.2. Gastrodiplomacy	6
I.2.3. Scope of Actors in Gastrodiplomacy	8
I.2.4. Chinese Food Regionalism	9
I.2.5. China's Gastrodiplomacy	11
I.2.6. Comparison with Other Countries Gastrodiplomacy Models	12
I.3. Problems Identification	14
I.4. Research Question	15
I.5. Research Objectives and Significance	15

I.6. Theoretical Framework	16
1.6.1. Soft Power Theory	16
1.6.2. Public Diplomacy	17
I.7. Research Methodology	18
I.8. Scope and Limitations of the Study	19
I.9. Research/Thesis Structure	19
I.9.1. Chapter I: Introduction	19
1.9.2. Chapter II: Suji Suan Cai Yu's History, Customer Experiences, and Observation Results	20
1.9.3. Chapter III: The Analysis of Suji Suan Cai Yu's Contribution	20
I.9.4. Chapter IV: Conclusion	20
I.10. Definition of Terms	20
CHAPTER II	22
II.1. The History of SUJI Suan Cai Yu	22
II.1.1. The Uniqueness of SUJI Suan Cai Yu	23
II.1.1.1. Authentic Chinese Sichuan Restaurant	23
II.1.1.2. The Flexibility for Consumers	24
II.1.1.3. Special Training for Employee	24
II.1.1.4. Chinese Culture Exposures	25
II.2. Customer's Experiences	26
II.2.1. Customer's Dining Experience	26
II.2.2. Customer's Opinion toward Chinese Culture	28
II.3. Observation Results	30
II.3.1. Restaurant's Architecture Design Comparison	30
II.3.2. Suan Cai Yu's Comparison	33
II.3.3. Restaurant's Services	34
CHAPTER III	35

III.1. Introduction to SUJI Suan Cai Yu in Cultural Context	35
III.2. The Theory and Concept of China's Gastrodiplomacy.....	36
III.2.1. The Theory of Soft Power and China's Public Diplomacy	36
III.2.2. China's Gastrodiplomacy Initiatives.....	40
III.3. Analysis: SUJI Suan Cai Yu as a Vehicle of China's	41
Gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia	41
III.3.1 SUJI Suan Cai Yu Positioning.....	41
III.3.2. The Analysis of Cultural Transmission and Public Perceptions toward Brand Authenticity.....	46
III.3.2.1. The Role of SUJI Suan Cai Yu toward Public's Chinese.....	49
III.3.3. The Final Analysis of SUJI Suan Cai Yu's Role in China's.....	50
Gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia	50
III.3.4. The Effectiveness and Limitations.....	52
III.4. Recommendation and Implication for Future China- Indonesia Cultural Relations	53
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION.....	55
REFERENCES.....	57
APPENDICES.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework	16
Figure 2. Soft Power Resources Framework	17
Figure 3. SUJI Suan Cai Yu's Mooncake Hampers	25
Figure 4. SUJI Suan Cai Yu's CNY Hampers.....	26
Figure 5. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Chen Mapo Tofu, Chengdu.....	30
Figure 6. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Chen Mapo Tofu, Chengdu.....	31
Figure 7. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Chen Mapo Tofu, Chengdu.....	31
Figure 8. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Shu Jiuxiang Hotpot, Chengdu	32
Figure 9. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Shu Jiuxiang Hotpot, Chengdu	32
Figure 10. (a). SUJI Suan Cai Yu, PIK, (b). Tai Er, Shanghai.....	33
Figure 11. (a). Complimentary Snack, (b). Complimentary Ice Cream	34