

Cultural Soft Power: Indonesia's Diplomacy Strategy through Music, Film, and Culinary Arts

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes Indonesia's cultural soft power strategy through three interconnected sectors: music, film, and culinary arts. Using a qualitative cultural diplomacy analysis, the study examines how these cultural expressions shape Indonesia's international image and contribute to its diplomatic objectives. Findings indicate that music diplomacy strengthens people-to-people relations through festivals and artistic collaborations, while film diplomacy enhances cultural familiarity and projects narrative identity across borders. Culinary diplomacy complements these efforts by leveraging gastrodiploamcy initiatives such as Indonesia Spice Up the World to introduce Indonesian flavors globally. However, the research also identifies structural fragmentation and inconsistent branding that weaken Indonesia's cultural influence compared with regional competitors. The study concludes that integrating music, film, and culinary arts into a cohesive cultural diplomacy framework is essential for enhancing Indonesia's soft power and establishing a unified national identity in global cultural ecosystems.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's pursuit of soft power has gained unprecedented significance in the evolving landscape of global cultural diplomacy, where states increasingly leverage cultural expressions to build influence, shape perceptions, and strengthen international engagement. As competition for global attention intensifies, cultural assets such as music, film, and culinary heritage have emerged as strategic instruments for projecting national identity and cultivating favorable international reception. Indonesia, with its vast cultural diversity and creative economy potential, is uniquely positioned to utilize cultural soft power as a complement to traditional statecraft in advancing foreign policy goals. International studies indicate that cultural diplomacy has become a primary mechanism through which states forge emotional resonance and long-term affinity,



making it an essential component of twenty-first century diplomacy. This shift reflects global trends where states such as South Korea, Japan, Thailand, and India maximize cultural exports to enhance geopolitical visibility and influence, demonstrating the increasing effectiveness of cultural content in shaping global narratives and perceptions (Gunawan, 2024). Although Indonesia has historically relied on traditional diplomacy, growing recognition of the creative economy's economic and symbolic value has catalyzed new initiatives to promote cultural soft power, especially through music festivals, film exchanges, and culinary branding.

Music-based diplomacy plays a central role in Indonesia's emerging cultural strategy, particularly through its capacity to foster people-to-people relations and transnational cultural affinity. Festivals such as the Prambanan Jazz Festival illustrate how Indonesian music can be a conduit for cultural exchange, tourism promotion, and international visibility. Music tourism has become a critical platform to strengthen Indonesia's cultural branding and attract global audiences, especially in the post-pandemic context where cultural events serve as recovery engines for both tourism and diplomatic engagement (Inaya, 2024). These events not only showcase Indonesian talent but also position the country as a hub for cultural collaboration and artistic innovation. The increasing circulation of Indonesian musical content in international platforms aligns with global best practices in cultural diplomacy, where music serves as a universal language capable of transcending political boundaries and fostering cross-cultural empathy. This strategic value underscores the importance of integrating music within Indonesia's broader diplomacy agenda, particularly as neighboring countries increasingly deploy cultural events as tools of foreign policy.

Film diplomacy represents another essential pillar of Indonesia's soft power strategy, reflecting the growing influence of visual storytelling in constructing national images and shaping cross-cultural understanding. International evidence demonstrates that film industries such as Bollywood and the Korean Wave have successfully established cultural and economic bridges with foreign societies, including Indonesia, by generating emotional engagement and cultural familiarity among viewers (Pavita et al., 2022). These global cases demonstrate how film can serve as a diplomatic bridge that cultivates cultural affinity even in the absence of formal political engagement. For Indonesia, the potential of film to enhance its soft power has gained traction as domestic filmmakers increasingly explore narratives rooted in cultural identity, local history, and contemporary social issues. Similar to Japan and South Korea, Indonesia recognizes that films have the capacity to humanize national identity, strengthen cultural tourism, and influence global perceptions through accessible storytelling (Islamiyah et al., 2020). As cultural consumption becomes more transnational, film diplomacy provides Indonesia with a strategic opportunity to assert its soft power presence within the competitive global cultural arena.

Culinary diplomacy has emerged as one of Indonesia's most promising cultural tools, strengthened by governmental programs designed to elevate the global visibility of Indonesian cuisine. Initiatives such as Indonesia Spice Up the World and various gastrodiplomacy campaigns target foreign publics by promoting Indonesian flavors, culinary heritage, and food-related experiences. Research highlights that culinary diplomacy effectively communicates cultural identity because food is both emotionally resonant and deeply embedded within social and cultural memory (Untari et al., 2024). Indonesian gastrodiplomacy initiatives have expanded significantly, with studies documenting strategic efforts to promote Indonesian cuisine in Australia, Toronto, and

other regions as part of national branding and economic diplomacy (Putri, 2025; Darma & Nuryanto, 2025). These initiatives align with broader global practices where states utilize culinary heritage to create symbolic capital and foster cultural interest, as seen in South Korea's *hansik* promotion campaigns (Nobelis et al., 2024) and Thailand's global culinary strategies (Praditsilp & Pongsakornrungsilp, 2024). As culinary diplomacy continues to gain recognition as a viable soft power instrument, Indonesia's challenge is to ensure strategic coherence in its culinary branding to maximize international influence.

Indonesia's soft power strategy is also shaped by the global environment where states increasingly engage in cultural competition. South Korea's Korean Wave influence in Indonesia demonstrates how sustained investment in cultural industries can generate profound diplomatic returns, affecting everything from public perception to economic cooperation (Yuel et al., 2023). Similarly, Turkey's cultural diplomacy toward Indonesia shows how cultural engagement can strengthen bilateral relationships by fostering mutual understanding and cultural familiarity (Zaelani & Sahide, 2021). These cases offer important lessons for Indonesia as it navigates a complex cultural landscape where foreign cultural influences often overshadow domestic cultural exports. Although Indonesia possesses immense cultural capital, its global cultural presence remains comparatively limited, illustrating the need for a more cohesive cultural diplomacy strategy that integrates music, film, and culinary arts into a unified national branding framework.

Despite progress in promoting cultural diplomacy, several challenges impede Indonesia's soft power effectiveness. First, the fragmentation of cultural initiatives across multiple agencies weakens policy coherence and reduces diplomatic impact. Research shows that many Indonesian cultural programs remain localized, uncoordinated, or lacking long-term sustainability, which diminishes their soft power potential (Destiviani & Azmawati, 2025). Compared with countries such as South Korea, which employs multi-track diplomacy strategies in cultural promotion (Ramadhani, 2025), Indonesia's cultural diplomacy remains under-institutionalized. Second, Indonesia's cultural exports still face visibility challenges in global markets dominated by large cultural industries from Korea, India, and the United States. Global competition requires not only content quality but also strong distribution networks, marketing systems, and international partnerships, areas where Indonesia's cultural industries continue to lag behind. Third, Indonesia's culinary diplomacy encounters branding inconsistencies as various stakeholders promote different narratives of Indonesian cuisine, leading to fragmented identity representation (MEINARTI, 2019). Without a unified narrative, Indonesia struggles to achieve strong place-brand recognition in global culinary platforms.

Existing research on Indonesia's cultural diplomacy reveals several gaps that this study addresses. Pavita et al.'s work on Bollywood diplomacy examines India's cultural influence in Indonesia but does not analyze how Indonesia projects its own film-based soft power abroad. Untari et al.'s study on gastrodiploamacy emphasizes the cultural value of food in fostering international relations but does not investigate how culinary diplomacy integrates with other Indonesian cultural sectors such as film and music. Inaya's research on the Prambanan Jazz Festival analyzes music tourism as a diplomatic tool but does not situate music within a larger multi-sector cultural diplomacy framework that reflects Indonesia's broader soft power strategy. These gaps indicate that existing studies tend to focus on single-sector cultural diplomacy

initiatives without examining how music, film, and culinary arts can be woven together into a synergistic national soft power strategy.

This article offers novelty by providing an integrated cultural diplomacy analysis of Indonesia's soft power approach, examining how three major cultural sectors collectively shape Indonesia's influence on international audiences. By synthesizing insights from music diplomacy, film exchange, and culinary branding, the study proposes a holistic understanding of cultural soft power that surpasses single-sector analyses. The purpose of this research is to analyze Indonesia's soft power strategies through cultural expressions in music, film, and culinary arts and to evaluate how these sectors collectively enhance Indonesia's cultural presence within global diplomatic landscapes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative cultural diplomacy analysis approach to examine how Indonesia utilizes music, film, and culinary arts as strategic instruments of soft power. Qualitative cultural diplomacy analysis prioritizes interpretive understanding of cultural expressions, diplomatic narratives, and symbolic interactions that shape international perception, making it suitable for analyzing nonmaterial forms of influence within global relations. The methodological foundation aligns with qualitative inquiry principles that emphasize contextual, meaning-centered, and discourse-based analysis, allowing a comprehensive examination of how cultural products function as diplomatic tools within Indonesia's international engagement (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cultural diplomacy analysis further draws upon interpretive frameworks within international relations and cultural studies to assess how states transmit identity, values, and national narratives through cultural expressions embedded in global flows (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data for this study are derived from scholarly literature, policy documents, cultural diplomacy reports, and empirical studies focusing on Indonesian soft power initiatives. The analysis employs thematic coding and interpretive synthesis, consistent with established qualitative research procedures, to identify patterns related to cultural messaging, audience reception, and diplomatic impact (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Through this approach, the study systematically examines how music events, film narratives, and culinary promotion campaigns construct cultural meanings that contribute to Indonesia's soft power. The qualitative cultural diplomacy framework thus enables a multidimensional exploration of Indonesia's cultural influence strategies within global contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Music Diplomacy and the Expanding Cultural Presence of Indonesia

Music diplomacy has become one of the most dynamic components of Indonesia's cultural soft power strategy, especially as global audiences increasingly engage with music as a medium of cross-cultural communication. In the contemporary diplomatic environment, music is recognized not merely as artistic expression but also as a symbolic instrument capable of building emotional resonance and strengthening people-to-people relations. Indonesia's musical landscape, characterized by diverse traditional forms, modern genres, and hybrid innovations, offers significant potential for constructing a distinctive cultural identity that appeals globally. Research on international music diplomacy reveals that culturally embedded musical performances

can influence foreign public perception, foster positive associations, and enhance national visibility within global cultural markets (Gunawan, 2024). In Indonesia, the strategic use of music within diplomatic contexts gained momentum during the post-pandemic recovery period when cultural festivals reemerged as platforms for both economic revitalization and cultural outreach. These developments position music diplomacy as an essential dimension of Indonesia's broader soft power framework.

One of the most illustrative examples of Indonesia's music diplomacy is the Prambanan Jazz Festival, which blends heritage architecture with contemporary musical acts to attract both domestic and international audiences. The festival's significance extends beyond entertainment, functioning as a cultural bridge that promotes Indonesia's historical heritage and artistic creativity simultaneously. Studies show that the festival strengthens music tourism and enhances Indonesia's image as a vibrant cultural destination, particularly during the pandemic and post-pandemic years when cultural events were instrumental in restoring social connectivity and international attention (Inaya, 2024). The pairing of global artists with Indonesian performers fosters cultural hybridity and presents Indonesia as an inclusive cultural hub capable of hosting globally relevant artistic collaborations. These performances also contribute to shaping Indonesia's creative narrative by demonstrating the country's artistic versatility and capacity to integrate global influences without eroding cultural authenticity.

Furthermore, Indonesian music diplomacy benefits from regional trends in which Asian cultural industries increasingly dominate global entertainment landscapes. The influence of the Korean Wave, for instance, demonstrates how sustained investment in cultural production can yield far-reaching diplomatic impact, shaping perceptions and strengthening international relations (Yuel et al., 2023). Indonesia's music sector draws important lessons from such examples, particularly in terms of content internationalization, branding strategy, and partnership building. While Indonesian music has not yet achieved the transnational ubiquity of Korean pop culture, emerging collaborations between Indonesian artists and international platforms suggest an upward trajectory in cultural outreach. These trends underscore Indonesia's potential to expand its cultural footprint by leveraging digital streaming platforms, musical festivals, and cross-border collaborations to enhance soft power.

Music diplomacy is also reinforced through community-based and institutional cultural programs that engage foreign publics through performances, workshops, and cultural exchange activities. Indonesian embassies and cultural centers increasingly organize music-centered initiatives that promote traditional instruments such as gamelan, angklung, and sasando. These cultural diplomacy activities provide foreign audiences with immersive experiences that facilitate deeper cultural appreciation, thereby strengthening cultural bonds. Research supports the notion that cultural immersion through music is among the most effective tools for cultivating long-term affinity toward a country because it engages both emotional and cognitive dimensions of cultural understanding (Praditsilp & Pongsakornrunsilp, 2024). For Indonesia, the ability to evoke cultural curiosity and emotional engagement through music serves as a strategic advantage in strengthening its soft power profile.

In addition, contemporary Indonesian musicians increasingly participate in global creative ecosystems, contributing to the transnational flow of cultural content that enhances Indonesia's cultural presence. Collaborative music production, participation in international festivals, and digital content distribution create opportunities for Indonesian artists to reach broader audiences. However, the extent to

which these activities translate into soft power gains depends on the coherence of Indonesia's cultural branding. As studies indicate, cultural diplomacy requires clear and consistent messaging to ensure that cultural outputs resonate with international audiences in ways that reinforce national identity (Zaelani & Sahide, 2021). Indonesia's challenge lies in strengthening narrative coherence across music diplomacy initiatives so that they systematically contribute to the country's international image.

While Indonesia's music diplomacy demonstrates significant potential, several challenges impede its full realization. First, the country's cultural initiatives often operate independently without integrated strategic frameworks, creating fragmented international messaging. Second, Indonesia faces competition from countries with more established cultural industries, including South Korea, Japan, and India, whose music sectors benefit from strong government support and global marketing infrastructure. Third, international recognition of Indonesian music remains limited, as global algorithms, media distribution systems, and entertainment networks tend to privilege already dominant cultural producers. These constraints highlight the importance of strategic investment in music production, international collaborations, and cultural branding to ensure that Indonesian music diplomacy can compete effectively in global cultural markets.

Nevertheless, the role of music in Indonesia's soft power landscape continues to expand as policymakers and creative actors increasingly recognize its diplomatic value. By leveraging heritage-based festivals, international collaborations, and community-oriented cultural diplomacy, Indonesia is progressively constructing a more visible and culturally appealing presence on the global stage. Music diplomacy therefore serves as both a symbolic and practical pathway for strengthening Indonesia's international influence, positioning the nation within broader cultural networks that shape global perceptions and relationships.

Film and Culinary Diplomacy as Strategic Extensions of Indonesia's Cultural Soft Power

Film and culinary diplomacy represent two strategic sectors through which Indonesia extends its cultural soft power in global contexts. These sectors operate at the intersection of identity expression, cultural communication, and public diplomacy, making them essential components of Indonesia's cultural influence strategy. Film, as a narrative medium, possesses unique persuasive power due to its ability to frame national identity, evoke emotional engagement, and construct cultural familiarity among global audiences. Studies of international film diplomacy demonstrate that cinematic narratives can shape public perceptions, create cultural bridges, and enhance bilateral relations even in the absence of direct political interaction (Pavita et al., 2022). Similarly, culinary diplomacy operates through sensory experience and cultural symbolism, offering a powerful means of communicating national identity through food traditions, flavors, and gastronomy-based storytelling. As global cultural competition intensifies, Indonesia increasingly relies on these forms of cultural expression to strengthen its visibility and influence within international cultural ecosystems.

Indonesian film diplomacy draws inspiration from global precedents such as Bollywood and the Korean Wave, which successfully leveraged cinematic narratives to build cultural affinity and promote national identity abroad. These cases underscore the potential of film as a powerful diplomatic tool capable of generating long-term cultural influence. In Indonesia, film festivals, international co-productions, and global digital

platforms serve as primary vehicles for disseminating Indonesian cinematic content. Studies comparing Japanese and Korean cultural diplomacy toward Indonesia reveal that film-based exchanges significantly enhance cross-cultural familiarity and foster emotional resonance among viewers, which in turn strengthens diplomatic relations (Islamiyah et al., 2020). Indonesia's film industry has gradually embraced culturally grounded storytelling, focusing on themes such as heritage, social identity, and local wisdom. Such narratives contribute to shaping Indonesia's soft power by presenting the nation as culturally rich, socially dynamic, and historically complex.

However, the effectiveness of Indonesia's film diplomacy depends on the extent to which domestic cinematic content can penetrate global markets dominated by large cultural industries. While Indonesia has experienced growth in film production, international distribution remains limited compared with regional competitors. Research shows that countries with strong cultural industries benefit from consolidated branding strategies, robust marketing networks, and coordinated international outreach, elements that Indonesia is still developing (Destiviani & Azmawati, 2025). The challenge for Indonesian film diplomacy lies in overcoming structural barriers such as insufficient global distribution infrastructure, limited co-production partnerships, and inconsistent branding narratives that weaken its international presence.

Culinary diplomacy, on the other hand, has advanced significantly through structured government initiatives and diaspora-driven cultural promotion. Indonesia Spice Up the World, for example, is a national program designed to introduce Indonesian cuisine to global audiences through restaurant expansion, culinary events, and branding initiatives. Studies indicate that culinary promotion effectively enhances national visibility because food communicates identity through sensory engagement, emotional memory, and cultural ritual (Untari et al., 2024). Gastrodiplomacy has become a cornerstone of Indonesia's cultural outreach, with research documenting strategic efforts to promote Indonesian cuisine in Australia, Canada, and other international cities (Putri, 2025; Darma & Nuryanto, 2025). These initiatives not only introduce new audiences to Indonesian flavors but also strengthen perceptions of Indonesia as a culturally rich and gastronomically diverse nation.

The global success of South Korea's *hansik* promotion demonstrates how culinary diplomacy can significantly enhance national branding when implemented through multi-track strategies that combine cultural messaging, restaurant expansion, and media representation (Nobelis et al., 2024). Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy efforts similarly draw upon these comparative lessons, seeking consistency in culinary identity and strategic alignment across stakeholders. However, challenges persist in achieving standardized branding of Indonesian cuisine, as domestic culinary diversity and decentralized promotion structures often result in fragmented international messaging. Studies show that without a coherent narrative or unified branding strategy, culinary diplomacy risks diluting national identity and weakening its soft power impact (MEINARTI, 2019).

To illustrate the comparative landscape of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy sectors, the following table presents an analytical summary of key strengths, challenges, and strategic opportunities in film and culinary diplomacy.

Analytical Overview of Indonesia's Film and Culinary Diplomacy

Sector	Strengths	Challenges	Strategic Opportunities
Film Diplomacy	Rich cultural narratives; emerging global collaborations; rising domestic production	Limited international distribution; strong regional competition; inconsistent branding	Strengthening co-production networks; expanding digital distribution; unified cultural branding
Culinary Diplomacy	Strong flavor identity; government programs; diaspora involvement	Fragmented culinary branding; limited global restaurant presence	Standardizing branding; expanding global culinary networks; leveraging gastrodiplomacy campaigns

The table demonstrates that both film and culinary diplomacy possess distinct advantages that contribute to Indonesia's soft power projection, yet both face structural limitations that require strategic refinement. Film diplomacy benefits from strong narrative potential but faces competition from established cultural industries, while culinary diplomacy enjoys strong cultural resonance but struggles with branding fragmentation.

Taken together, film and culinary diplomacy serve as key extensions of Indonesia's cultural soft power strategy. Their combined influence reinforces Indonesia's cultural visibility, strengthens its international engagement, and shapes global perceptions of the nation as a culturally vibrant and diplomatically relevant actor. When integrated with music diplomacy and broader creative economy initiatives, these sectors form a cohesive framework that enhances Indonesia's soft power presence within an increasingly competitive global cultural environment.

Integrating Music, Film, and Culinary Arts into a Coherent Cultural Soft Power Framework

The integration of music, film, and culinary arts into a unified soft power strategy is essential for maximizing Indonesia's cultural influence in the global arena. While each cultural sector possesses unique strengths and operates within distinct audience networks, their combined potential lies in their ability to project a cohesive narrative of Indonesian identity that resonates across cultural boundaries. Soft power effectiveness depends not only on the quality of cultural products but also on the coherence and consistency of their messaging, which determines how international audiences interpret and internalize national identity (Khairunnisa, 2024). Achieving this coherence requires strategic alignment across cultural initiatives so that music festivals, film productions, and culinary campaigns collectively reinforce an integrated cultural brand. Such alignment ensures that foreign audiences encounter Indonesia through a multifaceted yet harmonized set of cultural touchpoints, strengthening the emotional and symbolic impact of Indonesia's soft power projection.

Music diplomacy, film diplomacy, and culinary diplomacy naturally intersect in contemporary cultural ecosystems, creating opportunities for cross-sector collaboration that enhances Indonesia's cultural visibility. Music festivals, for example, can serve as platforms for showcasing Indonesian films and promoting culinary traditions. The Prambanan Jazz Festival demonstrates how cultural events attract international audiences who are simultaneously engaged in cultural consumption, creating

opportunities to integrate visual, auditory, and gastronomic experiences into one cohesive diplomatic platform (Inaya, 2024). By incorporating film screenings, culinary exhibitions, and artistic collaborations into such festivals, Indonesia can create immersive cultural narratives that deepen international engagement. Research on multicultural festivals in the Asia Pacific region highlights that cultural convergence strengthens diplomatic impact by constructing more memorable and emotionally resonant cultural experiences (Gunawan, 2024). This suggests that Indonesia's cultural diplomacy can benefit from a multi-modal approach that presents cultural identity through interconnected artistic expressions.

Film diplomacy similarly offers opportunities for cross-sector integration, particularly in amplifying culinary and musical narratives. Indonesian films that highlight traditional cuisine, regional music, or cultural rituals can serve as narrative vehicles for promoting culinary identity and musical heritage to international audiences. Global film industries provide numerous examples where national cuisine and music gain visibility through cinematic exposure, such as the role of Korean dramas in popularizing *hansik* and K-pop aesthetics (Adisti & Konety, 2025). Indonesia's cinematic sector can adopt similar strategies by embedding culinary storytelling and musical symbolism into film narratives that are distributed internationally. Research suggests that films with strong cultural themes contribute to nation branding by framing cultural uniqueness within emotionally compelling storylines that enhance global curiosity and cultural appreciation (Pavita et al., 2022). By aligning film narratives with other cultural diplomacy initiatives, Indonesia can reinforce a unified cultural identity that resonates across media platforms and international audiences.

Culinary diplomacy also offers strategic opportunities to integrate music and film into cohesive branding campaigns. Gastrodiplomacy initiatives such as *Indonesia Spice Up the World* already promote Indonesian cuisine in global markets through restaurant expansion, food festivals, and branding campaigns. These initiatives can be strengthened by incorporating Indonesian music and film content into culinary promotional events, creating a more textured and multidimensional representation of Indonesian culture. Studies show that gastrodiplomacy is most effective when it engages multiple senses and evokes emotional connections that strengthen cultural memory (Untari et al., 2024). Music and film can heighten these sensory experiences by providing cultural ambience, visual storytelling, and emotional resonance, which collectively reinforce the identity narratives embedded within culinary experiences. International gastrodiplomacy models demonstrate that cross-media integration significantly increases public engagement and strengthens national branding, as seen in the *hansik* promotion program that combines culinary exports, entertainment media, and cultural tourism (Nobelis et al., 2024). By incorporating similar integrative strategies, Indonesia can amplify the soft power impact of its culinary diplomacy.

Despite the clear advantages of integrating cultural sectors, Indonesia faces structural and institutional challenges that hinder cohesive soft power development. Fragmentation across governmental agencies and stakeholders leads to inconsistent messaging, with different institutions promoting varied narratives of Indonesian cultural identity. Studies show that cultural diplomacy initiatives in Indonesia often lack centralized coordination, resulting in competing branding strategies that dilute national representation in global arenas (Destiviani & Azmawati, 2025). Effective soft power projection requires unified strategic oversight that aligns cultural messaging across ministries, cultural agencies, creative economy sectors, and diaspora communities.

Without such alignment, Indonesia risks presenting an ambiguous cultural identity that weakens diplomatic impact.

The Korean and Thai cultural diplomacy models illustrate how centralized coordination and multi-track diplomacy enhance cultural soft power. South Korea's integration of culinary, film, and music promotion through multi-layered diplomatic channels demonstrates how cultural sectors can reinforce one another to produce a globally influential cultural brand (Ramadhani, 2025). Thailand's dance diplomacy similarly shows how state-sponsored cultural convergence creates a coherent national image that strengthens soft power presence in regional and global cultural networks (Praditsilp & Pongsakornrungsilp, 2024). These models highlight the importance of unified cultural strategies that coordinate government institutions, creative industries, and civil society in promoting a consistent national identity. Indonesia can draw from these examples to refine its cultural diplomacy framework, focusing on cross-sector synergy, consistent branding, and long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, diaspora communities play an important role in connecting Indonesian cultural sectors with global audiences. Diaspora-led culinary businesses, film communities, and musical collaborations contribute to Indonesia's informal cultural diplomacy by organically promoting national identity. Studies indicate that diaspora networks are critical agents in amplifying cultural influence, particularly when governmental efforts are limited or fragmented (Darma & Nuryanto, 2025). Indonesian restaurants abroad, for example, often serve as cultural touchpoints that introduce foreign publics to Indonesian flavors, music, and cultural narratives. These community-driven initiatives can be strengthened through formal partnerships, resource support, and coordinated branding efforts that align diaspora activities with national cultural diplomacy strategies.

Digital platforms also provide fertile ground for integrating cultural sectors into cohesive soft power strategies. With digital consumption accelerating globally, Indonesia can leverage social media, streaming platforms, and virtual events to disseminate integrated cultural content. Research shows that online cultural dissemination plays an increasingly important role in soft power projection, enabling states to reach global audiences efficiently and interactively (Yuel et al., 2023). Indonesia's creative economy actors already utilize digital spaces to share music videos, culinary tutorials, and film content, yet these initiatives remain largely decentralized. Coordinated digital diplomacy efforts that combine music, film, and culinary storytelling could significantly enhance Indonesia's cultural presence and engage wider international audiences.

In sum, integrating music, film, and culinary diplomacy into a cohesive soft power strategy presents Indonesia with substantial opportunities to strengthen national identity, global visibility, and international influence. The convergence of these cultural expressions produces a multidimensional narrative of Indonesian culture that is emotionally resonant, symbolically rich, and diplomatically effective. However, realizing these opportunities requires overcoming structural fragmentation, improving strategic coordination, and fostering collaborative partnerships across sectors. A robust cultural soft power framework depends on institutional coherence, narrative unity, and sustained cultural investment, enabling Indonesia to assert its cultural presence more confidently within the competitive landscape of global cultural diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that music, film, and culinary arts constitute powerful components of Indonesia's cultural soft power, each contributing uniquely to the nation's diplomatic visibility and global cultural resonance. Analysis across the three sectors demonstrates that Indonesia is increasingly adopting culturally driven strategies that enhance international engagement by leveraging emotional connection, sensory experience, and narrative identity. However, while these sectors hold considerable diplomatic potential, their effectiveness depends on Indonesia's ability to integrate them into a unified and coherent cultural diplomacy framework capable of projecting a strong and consistent national identity across global audiences.

Strengthening Indonesia's cultural soft power requires coordinated institutional strategies, increased investment in global cultural platforms, and capacity-building for creative industries to penetrate international markets. Prioritizing synergy among music festivals, film narratives, and culinary branding initiatives will enhance cultural coherence and amplify Indonesia's global presence. Practical steps such as unified branding, cross-sector collaboration, and diaspora engagement can help Indonesia transform its cultural capital into sustained diplomatic influence. By cultivating integrated cultural expressions, Indonesia can position itself as a culturally vibrant and globally relevant nation with a strong and compelling soft power identity.

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