



Unraveling Dilemmas in the Intricate Coopetition of Culinary Destinations

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ABSTRACT

Tourism destinations are multifaceted systems involving a range of stakeholders who collaborate to provide cohesive experiences. In these systems, the phenomenon of coopetition, where cooperation and competition coexist, plays a critical role. This study investigates coopetitive dynamics within the culinary tourism sector of Banyuwangi, a key economic driver in the region. Employing a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and participant observation, the study explores the interactions among key stakeholders, including government representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and culinary entrepreneurs. Using drama theory as an analytical framework, the findings reveal the complex dilemmas these actors face, such as balancing shared objectives with individual interests and managing power imbalances. The study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of coopetition in tourism, offering recommendations for improving stakeholder collaboration and enhancing tourism destination management strategies.

Keywords: *tourism destination, coopetition, drama theory, dilemmas*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism destinations are intricate, networked systems [1] where multiple stakeholders collaborate to create unified tourism products [3]. The complexity of such destinations has been widely examined [4]; [1], revealing their nonlinear, self-organizing, emergent, and resilient properties [1]. These distinctive traits stem from the participation of several actors aiming to deliver cohesive consumer experiences that collectively define unified tourism products [3]; [6].

Tourism destinations consist of interconnected actors, which [7] describe as nodes linked together. These nodes symbolize several entities within the destination, such as public or private companies and local businesses that supply resources or services for tourism products [1]. The links represent relationships between these entities, whether business-related or non-business-related [1]. Such relationships allow dispersed actors to mobilize resources or services [6] to deliver tourism products effectively. This framework also helps explain public-private partnerships commonly observed in tourism, where governments lease spaces to private firms for management as tourist destinations to attract visitors [8].

The concept of delivering a unified tourism product [2]; [2] frequently suggests the presence of collaborative relationships among actors within tourism destinations. Such collaboration can improve the destination's image [8], attract a greater number of tourists, and support the sustainability of the destination [3]. Nonetheless, this collaborative viewpoint often neglects the possibility of competition among actors in tourism destinations [9]; [10]. Each actor within a destination operates with its own interests [3], which may not always be aligned with the interests of other actors. It is natural for these actors to seek continuous improvement to surpass competitors [11] and optimize their profits. As a result, actors within tourism destinations frequently participate in relationships that are both cooperative and competitive, a phenomenon referred to as coopetition [12].

[9] and [2] offer a vivid portrayal of coopetition among destination actors through the analogy of "duck" and "hare" images. These illustrations demonstrate how cooperation and competition coexist simultaneously, akin to optical illusions where one can perceive either a "duck" or a "hare." The "duck" represents collaborative relationships in which

actors collectively commit to "serving the destination" [2]. In this scenario, all actors are responsible for sustaining the destination by attracting tourists and preserving the environment. On the other hand, the "hare" symbolizes competitive dynamics among destination actors. This arises when the "destination serves" the actors, prompting competition to capture individual value [2].

Previous studies have highlighted the advantages of coopetitive relationships, noting that they enhance firms' performance and innovative capabilities ([13]. [12] contend that coopetition offers benefits from both competition and cooperation perspectives. Competitive pressures can drive innovation and improve performance, while collaboration allows firms to access unique resources from their partners. Additionally, coopetition enables actors to leverage each other's strategic resources, thereby accelerating product development [13]. Nevertheless, the outcomes of coopetitive relationships are not always favorable [16]. It is essential for actors to strike a balance between competition and cooperation to achieve the best results [17]. Coopetition is also prone to tensions [12], which can confuse, conflicts [18], and even the dissolution of relationships [19]. This condition emphasizes the need to manage coopetitive relationships to maximize their outcomes effectively.

This study aims to analyze the complex coopetitive interactions within Banyuwangi's culinary destination. Banyuwangi was selected for its diverse culinary offerings, which involve multiple stakeholders. This research aims to make two key contributions to the literature. First, it seeks to advance the coopetition literature in the tourism sector, an area that remains relatively underexplored [20], with a particular focus on the interactions among actors within tourism destinations. Second, the study introduces a *drama theory* approach [21] to the study of coopetition. *Drama theory* is a decision-support tool designed to analyze multiparty interactions with diverse interests [22]. This approach can provide valuable insights for actors to better understand the dynamics of coopetitive relationships.

While coopetition has been extensively studied across several industries, its exploration within the tourism sector remains relatively limited [20]. [2] highlights the coopetition dynamics within tourism destinations, emphasizing the need for stakeholders to collaborate to sustain the destination while competing to capture its value. [9] build on this perspective, examining competition at different levels within tourism institutions, influenced by factors such as destination maturity and the roles of local destination management organizations. [23] provide an example of micro-level coopetition among pedicab drivers in Yogyakarta, who compete for individual customers but cooperate when serving group rides. At the destination level, [24] explore how stakeholder trust fosters collaboration to enhance tourist experiences while competition for value persists. Coopetition within tourism can emerge either unintentionally due to the proximity of diverse actors or intentionally as part of strategic decisions.

[27], in their study on coopetition dynamics in tourism destinations in Macau, observe a shift in actors' perceptions toward coopetition. Their review of the literature on coopetition in tourism incorporates both resource-based and network perspectives. While previous research in the tourism sector has primarily focused on the activities involved in coopetition, the network perspective often delves into the evolving relationships within coopetitive environments. Despite these valuable insights, the literature on coopetition in tourism remains insufficiently explored, leaving many questions unanswered [20].

Bridging this gap, this study employs a *drama theory* approach to analyze the coopetitive interactions within Banyuwangi's culinary tourism destination. The hypothesis guiding this research posits that coopetitive relationships among tourism stakeholders in Banyuwangi are shaped by a dynamic interplay of competition and cooperation, influenced by multiple factors such as trust, resource sharing, and strategic positioning. *Drama theory*, as a decision support tool, enables us to explore these interactions by viewing the tourism actors as roles in a drama, where each actor navigates the tension between collaborative and competitive behaviors in the pursuit of shared or individual goals. Through this theoretical lens, the study hypothesizes that the coopetition process will evolve over time, with different phases characterized by varying degrees of cooperation and competition. This hypothesis will be tested by analyzing the ongoing dynamics of competition in Banyuwangi's culinary tourism sector, offering insights into the mechanisms that drive collaboration and competition among destination stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Coopetition on Tourism

There is no consensus on the definition of coopetition. [28] describe coopetition broadly as a value network comprising complementors (who enhance the value of a firm's product/service) and competitors (who diminish it). They liken coopetition to the analogy of cooperating to create a larger pie and competing to divide it. [12] define coopetition as a relationship that includes cooperation and competition. [29] also provide a straightforward definition, viewing coopetition as a competitor collaboration. For a more nuanced understanding, this study adopts the definition by [30], which describes coopetition as "a paradoxical relationship between two or more actors simultaneously involved in cooperative and competitive interactions, regardless of whether their relationship is horizontal or vertical." This

definition highlights important aspects of cooptation, such as its occurrence in horizontal and vertical relationships, its potential to involve multiple actors, and its simultaneous nature.

Cooperation can take on several forms of relationships. According to [17], it can vary in the degree of cooperation and competition, leads to four types: cooperative-dominant (strong cooperation, weak competition), competitive-dominant (strong competition, weak cooperation), balanced strong (strong in both), and balanced weak (weak in both). Additionally, cooperation can occur at different relational levels, either vertically (involving supplier, buyer, or subcontractor relationships) or horizontally (involving joint ventures, license agreements, or alliances while still competing in the same market or product segment) as observed by [29]. Moreover, cooperation can emerge deliberately as a strategic decision by firms or unintentionally due to situational circumstances [25].

2.2. Drama Theory

Drama theory, an evolution of game theory [21], offers a framework for analyzing complex interactions involving cooperation and competition among multiple actors [22]. While game theory is commonly applied in cooperation literature [28]; [32]; the use of *drama theory* in cooperation studies remains uncommon. Previous studies [28]; [32] have recognized game theory's utility in cooperation research. [28] applied game theory to demonstrate how cooperation shifts from a conventional win-lose mindset to collaboration aimed at creating greater value before competing to divide it. [32] analyzed strategic choices of insurance firms in cooperative environments using game theory. Through game theory, [31] explored the rationale for innovation in cooperative settings. [33] highlighted several benefits of game theory for cooperation studies, including its ability to analyze interfirm relationships by capturing how actions influence outcomes, distinguishing between cooperation and competition, and offering sophisticated solutions based on equilibrium concepts. Despite game theory's recognized strengths in formulating cooperation strategies, it has limitations that could potentially be addressed by *drama theory*. Nevertheless, *drama theory* remains relatively obscure in cooperation studies.

Richardson et al. (n.d.) critique certain oversimplified assumptions of game theory, particularly its assumption that decisions are always made within a fixed and rational framework. Game theory assumes that options, preferences, and the number of players remain consistent, which may not reflect real-world variability and changing conditions. In contrast, *drama theory* introduces a flexible option board known as a standard reference frame [34], allowing for capturing of multi-party situations with multiple options. While game theory can theoretically handle multi-party and multi-option scenarios, it is often challenging and impractical to analyze such complex situations using this framework [34]. *Drama theory* is a decision-support tool that analyzes complex interactions involving multiple parties and interests [22]. It provides insights into the dynamics of interactions, which unfold as a series of episodes involving collaboration and conflict [35]. Within these episodes, actors may experience tension—a conflict between what they prefer to do and what they perceive they should do [34], which is a dilemma. [21] identify three dilemmas that can arise within interactions, stemming from actors' uncertainties about others' decisions.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research methodology is suitable for examining the complex cooperative interactions within Banyuwangi's culinary destination. This approach facilitates an exploratory study focusing on understanding through open-ended inquiry and detailed descriptions [37]. Banyuwangi's culinary destination is chosen as the research focus due to its diverse array of culinary products involving numerous stakeholders. The destination presents significant potential for exploring cooperation dynamics among several actors involved in the research.

Drama theory is a decision-support methodology that analyzes and understands complex interactions among multiple stakeholders, especially in conflicting interests. It draws from the ideas of theater and drama to examine the participants' roles, conflicts, and strategies within a given scenario. The theory views situations as "dramas," with the actors (stakeholders) taking on different roles, such as protagonists, antagonists, or supporting characters. These roles interact in ways that reflect cooperation, competition, and negotiation. *Drama theory* helps to identify how these dynamics evolve and influence decision-making processes and outcomes.

Below is a more detailed explanation of *drama theory* as a method:

1. **Role Identification:** In *drama theory*, actors are assigned specific roles that influence how they interact with other stakeholders. These roles are not fixed but can shift depending on the context and the interests involved. The actors' behaviors and decisions are influenced by their roles in the larger "drama" of the situation.
2. **Conflict and Cooperation:** *Drama theory* explores how conflict and cooperation coexist in multi-party settings. It posits that actors often experience tension between their competitive and collaborative impulses. By viewing these relationships as a "drama," the theory enables researchers to study how actors move between cooperation (working together for mutual benefit) and competition (competing to maximize individual gain).
3. **Decision Support Tool:** The theory provides a framework for decision-making, helping to understand the strategic choices of stakeholders involved in a conflict or cooperative situation. *Drama theory* examines how different actors

might alter their strategies based on the interactions and decisions of others, helping to predict outcomes and optimize strategies.

4. **Game-Theory Connections:** *Drama theory* shares similarities with game theory, where one actor's decisions depend on others' expected actions. However, drama theory emphasizes the narratives and the evolving roles of the participants rather than strictly numerical outcomes. It is beneficial in settings where emotions, perceptions, and evolving relationships are key decision-making drivers.
5. **Dynamic Analysis:** One of the key contributions of *drama theory* is its focus on the dynamic nature of interactions. Unlike static models, drama theory allows researchers to study how relationships and strategies change over time, as well as how past interactions shape future behavior.
6. **Application to Coopetition:** In the context of coopetition, *drama theory* is especially valuable for understanding how cooperation and competition coexist. It helps to illustrate how stakeholders in tourism destinations, for instance, may collaborate to achieve mutual benefits (such as improving the destination's image) while simultaneously competing to capture value (such as tourists' attention and spending).

In sum, *drama theory* provides a lens through which complex and often conflicting relationships can be analyzed. It is particularly well-suited for examining dynamic environments like tourism destinations, where stakeholders must navigate competitive and collaborative relationships to achieve their goals. By viewing these interactions through the lens of drama, researchers can gain deeper insights into how decisions are made, how conflicts are managed, and how cooperation is built.

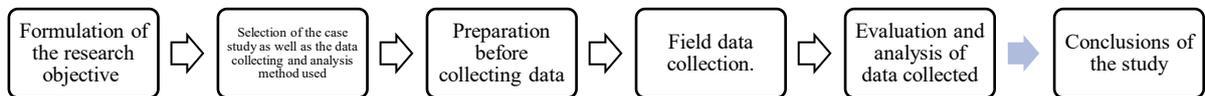


Figure I Sequence of the study (Adopted from [38])

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Culinary activities in Banyuwangi subdistrict involve four main stakeholders: local residents, government representatives, private sector actors, and NGOs. The rapid growth of food courts in Banyuwangi Regency has led to innovative interactions among these actors, where they both collaborate and compete. Local residents, often small-scale producers or vendors, work with government representatives to promote traditional culinary offerings. However, competition arises as private sector actors seek to enhance their market share, while NGOs focus on promoting sustainability and cultural preservation. Drama theory can be applied to analyze how these actors balance cooperation and competition to achieve their goals, revealing the underlying dilemmas and tensions within their interactions. The study of these dynamics is crucial to understanding the development of culinary tourism in Banyuwangi.

The food court sector in Banyuwangi Regency is a focal point for understanding the coopetition dynamics at play. Local residents, who produce traditional foods like Sego Tempung and Rujak Soto, cooperate with private sector actors and the government to enhance the destination's appeal. However, tensions emerge as each actor strives to gain a competitive edge. Government representatives aim to promote culinary tourism while maintaining cultural integrity, and private sector actors seek to maximize their profits by expanding food court offerings. NGOs, in turn, push for sustainable practices in food production and business operations. Using *drama theory*, we can explore how these actors navigate conflicts and alliances, revealing the complex decision-making processes and power plays that shape the culinary landscape in Banyuwangi. This analysis, combined with the Business Model Canvas (BMC) and VRIO perspectives, helps uncover the strategic choices and value creation processes within the food court market.

The government representative overseeing Banyuwangi subdistrict holds three primary responsibilities: managing the subdistrict, overseeing culinary activities, and coordinating tourism initiatives. Drama theory shows these roles as part of a complex interaction between cooperation and competition, where the government must balance several interests. Firstly, their role in serving local residents and facilitating the overall development of the subdistrict involves managing cooperation among different stakeholders. However, tensions arise as the government needs to balance local needs with broader regional objectives. In their second responsibility, overseeing culinary activities, the government works to enhance the destination by promoting local food culture while fostering innovation in culinary offerings. Here, competition emerges as food vendors and private sector actors vie for market share, creating a dynamic interplay that must be managed. Finally, the government's responsibility in managing tourism activities requires strategic coordination of all actors to promote and sustain tourism. The government faces dilemmas in maintaining cultural integrity while encouraging economic growth through tourism, requiring careful navigation of competing interests. Using *drama theory*, the analysis can uncover how these roles create underlying tensions and opportunities for collaboration, revealing the complexities in managing a destination like Banyuwangi.

While it appears that all stakeholders collaborate in managing the tourism destination in Banyuwangi subdistrict, *drama theory* highlights that competition or conflicting interests can emerge due to the diverse perspectives and priorities of the involved actors [26]. In the context of Banyuwangi, tensions arise from the differing values and objectives between the government representative and NGOs, despite both entities sharing a common goal of enhancing tourism. According to *drama theory*, these differing perceptions create dilemmas where cooperation becomes complicated, as each stakeholder pursues their own vision for the region's development. The government may prioritize economic growth and infrastructure development, while NGOs might emphasize cultural preservation or environmental sustainability. These differences in values and principles lead to underlying conflicts, which can challenge the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts. The resulting tensions may affect the strategies adopted for tourism development, influencing both the direction and success of initiatives promoting Banyuwangi as a culinary destination. By utilizing *drama theory*, it becomes possible to identify the critical moments of tension where stakeholders' conflicting goals may need to be negotiated or reconciled to ensure effective collaboration.

On one side, the NGO is primarily focused on advancing Banyuwangi's culinary destination through tourism initiatives involving local residents. Conversely, the government representative's responsibilities extend beyond culinary development including overall subdistrict management and tourism oversight. According to drama theory, this divergence creates a dramatic conflict where each actor's roles and actions reflect distinct interests and goals. The NGO advocates for the government to prioritize human capital development and infrastructure projects directly supporting culinary activities, believing such investments will enhance regional tourism. However, the government representative focuses on broader infrastructure development, such as roads, public services, and general tourism promotion, rather than specific human capital or culinary infrastructure investments. From the *drama theory* perspective, this discrepancy in goals leads to a tension-filled interaction, where the NGO feels disregarded and unsupported. As a result, the NGO expresses dissatisfaction and contemplates withdrawing its support for tourism activities in the subdistrict. The differing expectations and actions of the actors create a dilemma where the government's more significant strategic priorities do not align with the NGO's specific focus on culinary tourism, thus intensifying the conflict and possibly undermining effective collaboration. By applying *drama theory*, the analysis reveals the dramatic tensions between the stakeholders, where contrasting values and goals require negotiation to resolve.

In this scenario (**Figure II**), a persuasion dilemma emerges between the government representative and the NGO, as highlighted by [21]. Both parties are well aware of their conflicting preferences and remain firm in their intended actions. They understand that each will proceed regardless of the other's stance. However, continuing this manner could lead to negative consequences for both parties. The government representative risks alienating the NGO, which could result in a lack of support for tourism development in the Banyuwangi subdistrict. On the other hand, the NGO faces the possibility of missing out on contributing to the development of Banyuwangi's culinary destination. This situation exemplifies a dilemma where, as [39] suggested, adjusting preferences or revising options becomes essential for resolving the conflict. By applying the drama theory framework, it becomes possible to examine the underlying tensions and dynamics between these stakeholders, revealing insights that could guide adjustments in their interactions. This deeper understanding can foster more cooperative behavior, potentially leading to outcomes that benefit both parties and contribute to the sustainable development of the culinary tourism sector in Banyuwangi.

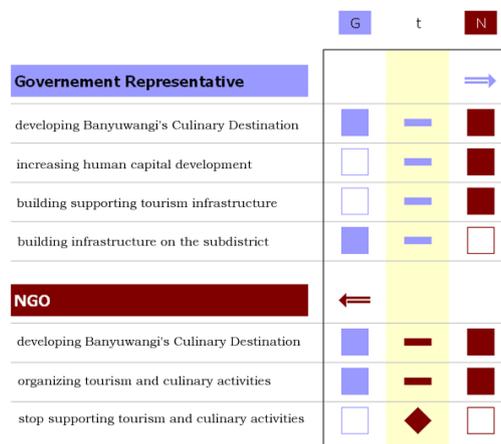


Figure 2. Drama Theory Interaction Framework between Government Representative and NGO

4.1. Reflection On Drama Theory

In the context of *drama theory*, the analysis of interactions between stakeholders in Banyuwangi reveals how the roles played by actors involved in managing the culinary tourism destination contribute to the dynamics of *coopetition*. *Drama theory* views each interaction as a "drama" involving specific roles performed by actors, who interact through a series of actions and reactions influenced by the dilemmas they face. In this case, stakeholders such as the government, NGOs, and local businesses are positioned in a tension-filled scenario between collaboration and competition.

Government's Role: The government in this context plays the role of the "main protagonist" managing not only the culinary tourism destination but also other aspects of regional development. In *drama theory*, this role is more complex because the government must consider many interests and limited resources, often focusing on large infrastructure projects while paying less attention to human development or culinary infrastructure. Conflict arises because the government is caught in a dilemma between serving macroeconomic interests through large-scale infrastructure development and the need to support community-based initiatives, such as culinary development.

NGO's Role: On the other hand, the NGO plays the role of the "messenger of change," focusing on empowering local communities and developing human resources. Within the framework of *drama theory*, this role can be seen as an effort to bring a more substantial social value, which often conflicts with the more significant economic priorities emphasized by the government. Tension arises when the NGO feels that the government's support does not meet their expectations, particularly regarding the development of culinary infrastructure that can drive the local economy. The NGO feels "marginalized" in this drama, leading to the possibility of withdrawing their support from tourism-related projects in Banyuwangi.

Conflict and Dilemma: One of the key concepts in *drama theory* is the dilemma faced by the actors in the story. This dilemma often involves not just a choice between two alternatives but also a clash of values. In this case, the dilemma faced by the government is between supporting local culinary development as part of Banyuwangi's culture and focusing on larger projects that provide long-term benefits at a broader scale. Meanwhile, the NGO faces the dilemma between compromising with the government's priorities or maintaining its agenda to support culinary development and community empowerment.

Tension in Interactions: *Drama theory* also emphasizes the tension that arises in interactions between actors. In this case, the tension occurs between collaboration and competition. Each actor has different interests—the government seeks measurable economic growth, while the NGO is more focused on the immediate social impact on the community. This tension leads to conflicts that can hinder collaborative efforts to develop Banyuwangi as a culinary destination. *Drama theory* helps to illustrate how this tension is not just the result of incompatible interests but also a reflection of the values held by each actor.

Conflict Resolution: In the framework of *drama theory*, resolving this conflict does not depend on one party winning but on how each actor manages their role in this shared story. Understanding each party's role and dilemmas can create a more harmonious resolution where collaboration occurs despite tensions. This resolution may not be perfect, but through dialogue and understanding each actor's role, Banyuwangi's culinary tourism destination can develop more effectively.

4.2. Emphasis on the Impact of Conflict

The conflict between stakeholders in Banyuwangi's culinary tourism development, as analyzed through the lens of *drama theory*, has significant repercussions on the overall success of the destination. *Drama theory* helps highlight how the tensions between different actors—government representatives, NGOs, and local businesses—can escalate, leading to an environment where collaboration is hindered and the potential for innovative solutions is stifled. The tension between the stakeholders is not just a theoretical construct; it has practical implications for the development of the culinary tourism sector. When stakeholders are unable to reconcile their differences, it can result in missed opportunities for synergy and mutual growth. For example, the government's prioritization of large infrastructure projects over culinary development can leave local businesses and NGOs feeling neglected, which may ultimately reduce their enthusiasm and investment in tourism-related initiatives. Similarly, when the NGO perceives a lack of support for culinary initiatives, it may withdraw its resources, thus disrupting ongoing efforts to boost local food culture. This fragmentation of efforts can delay or even derail long-term development plans, undermining the overall growth potential of Banyuwangi as a culinary destination.

In the context of *drama theory*, the actors' inability to align their goals leads to a distorted narrative, where the ideal outcome—the flourishing of Banyuwangi's culinary tourism—becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. The actors become locked in a cycle of competitive behavior rather than cooperative engagement, further deepening the divide between them. The tension thus creates a barrier to collective problem-solving, leaving each actor to focus on their individual agenda rather than working towards a shared vision.

Furthermore, this conflict can have a broader social and economic impact, affecting not only the stakeholders but also the local community. If key players like NGOs and local businesses feel marginalized, their willingness to invest time, resources, and expertise diminishes, which could slow the creation of a more sustainable and inclusive tourism ecosystem. The government, in turn, risks facing growing dissatisfaction from these groups, undermining public support for tourism initiatives and further complicating future policymaking. In summary, the conflict among stakeholders within Banyuwangi's culinary tourism development, as framed by *drama theory*, underscores the importance of addressing and resolving these tensions. Without effective conflict management, the destination's potential as a thriving culinary tourism hub may remain unrealized, with the consequences echoing across the region's economic, cultural, and social fabric.

In analyzing the dynamics of stakeholders in Banyuwangi's culinary tourism development through the lens of drama theory, we find alignment with existing research on cooptation in tourism contexts. According to [12], cooptation, where competing firms also cooperate, leads to both collaboration and competition in business relationships. This mirrors the relationship between the government and NGOs in Banyuwangi, where both parties aim to promote the region's culinary tourism but have different priorities. Similarly, the study by [27] on tourism destinations in Macau highlights how cooperation and competition coexist in tourism settings, especially when stakeholders have differing yet complementary roles. This aligns with the Banyuwangi case, where government representatives focus on broad infrastructure development, while NGOs advocate for human capital investment and culinary-specific infrastructure. [26] also highlight that cooptation dynamics often generate conflicts due to differing interests, a concept evident in Banyuwangi's tourism development. In their study of tourism partnerships, these tensions often complicate collaboration efforts, similar to the situation in Banyuwangi, where conflicting priorities threaten to undermine cooperation. Furthermore, [41] emphasizes the potential for culinary tourism to drive economic and cultural development. This argument resonates with Banyuwangi's approach to leveraging its culinary heritage as a key tourism asset despite the ongoing stakeholder tensions. These scholarly insights provide a comprehensive view of how drama theory, coupled with cooptation dynamics, offers valuable tools to analyze and navigate the complexities of stakeholder relationships in tourism development.

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights that culinary tourism destinations in Banyuwangi function as complex systems involving multiple stakeholders engaged in developing and managing the destination. The study reveals the dynamics between the government, non-governmental organizations, and culinary entrepreneurs through a cooptation approach, which combines elements of cooperation and competition. While these actors share a common goal of developing Banyuwangi's culinary destination, each has distinct interests and priorities, creating dilemmas and challenges in their collaboration. *Drama theory* provides a valuable framework for analyzing these interactions, revealing tensions in decision-making processes influenced by stakeholder differences in values and principles. The findings underscore the importance of adjusting strategies and approaches to ensure collective goals are met without neglecting the individual interests of each actor. By understanding the dilemmas arising from cooptation, the involved parties can develop more effective mechanisms to enhance collaboration, reduce tensions, and foster better destination management. Overall, this study contributes significantly to understanding cooptation within the tourism context, particularly in destinations where culinary offerings are a significant attraction. The practical implications of these findings emphasize the need for aligning government policies with private sector initiatives, as well as the crucial role of NGOs in promoting sustainable tourism development.

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