



Implementation of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism development and contribution to the cultural dissemination of Ecuador

Implementación de la Gastrodiplomacia como eje estratégico de desarrollo turístico y aporte en la difusión cultural de Ecuador

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Received: 28/06/2024 – Accepted: 22/10/2024 – Published: 01/01/2025

Research
Articles

Review
Articles

Essay
Articles

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Abstract.

Gastrodiplomacy refers to the strategies executed by a nation to spread gastronomic culture abroad, to make the culture known through the flavors of the territory through gastronomy. In Ecuador, the implementation of gastrodiplomacy symbolizes a viable alternative to be carried out as a strategic axis with a view to tourism development and contribution to the cultural dissemination of the diversity of Ecuadorian products and gastronomy. The purpose of this study was to propose the application of gastrodiplomacy as an implementation strategy by the national authority as a pillar of tourism development in Ecuador. The research methodology applied in the present study is of an exploratory nature with a qualitative approach given that the literature survey corresponding to gastrodiplomacy and its impact on the cultural diffusion of a country is used as a method; and the use of the Delphi method to validate the proposed strategies by experts in the field. The results of this research reflect the viability of implementing Gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism development by the competent entities due to the high impact on the international cultural diffusion of Ecuador; given that success cases in countries in Asia and America have been studied, which is applicable in our country. In conclusion, the representative gastronomic diversity of our country that characterizes us for having four marked regions: Coast, Sierra, Amazon and Galapagos shows multiculturalism even in our products and gastronomy valued internationally.

Keywords:

Gastrodiplomacy - Strategic Axis - Development - Tourism - Dissemination - Cultural.

Resumen.

La gastrodiplomacia se refiere a las estrategias ejecutadas por una nación para difundir la cultura gastronómica en el exterior, dar a conocer la cultura mediante los sabores propios del territorio a través de la gastronomía. En Ecuador la implementación de la gastrodiplomacia simboliza una alternativa viable para llevarse a cabo en calidad de eje estratégico con miras al desarrollo turístico y aporte en la difusión cultural de la diversidad de productos y gastronomía ecuatoriana. El propósito del presente estudio fue plantear la aplicación de la gastrodiplomacia como una estrategia de implementación por parte de la autoridad nacional como pilar del desarrollo turístico en el Ecuador. La metodología de la investigación aplicada en el presente estudio es de carácter exploratorio con enfoque cualitativo dado que se emplea como método el levantamiento de literatura correspondientes a la gastrodiplomacia y su impacto en la difusión cultural de un país; y la utilización del método Delphi para validar las estrategias propuestas por parte de expertos de la rama. Los resultados de la presente investigación reflejan la viabilidad de implementar la Gastrodiplomacia como eje estratégico de desarrollo turístico por parte de los entes competentes debido al alto impacto en la difusión cultural a nivel internacional del Ecuador; dado que se ha estudiado los casos de éxito en países de Asia y América, que resulta aplicable en nuestro país. En conclusión, la diversidad gastronómica representativa de nuestro país que nos caracteriza por ser tener cuatro regiones marcadas: Costa, Sierra, Amazonía y Galápagos muestra la multiculturalidad inclusive en nuestros productos y gastronomía valorada a nivel internacional.

Palabras clave:

Gastrodiplomacia - Eje Estratégico - Desarrollo - Turístico - Difusión - Cultural.

1. Introduction

Gastrodiplomacy refers to the promotion of a country's culinary culture in order to share its essence, peculiarities, techniques, ingredients, and unique characteristics with people from other nations. Its development and recognition generate tourism activities with a cultural and gastronomic focus [1].

The term gastrodiplomacy does not appear in the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE), but etymologically it comes from the combination of two words: gastronomy and diplomacy, which together are understood as the art of

preparing good food and its influence on politics and international relations [2].

Rockover [3] points out that gastrodiplomacy is an increasingly popular strategy for public diplomacy and has an impact on a country's brand. Furthermore, it fosters global awareness of different cultures through national brand promotion and international relations within the framework of inter-country engagement.

Economic, social, cultural, and political factors (political will) are fundamental in the implementation and empowerment of gastrodiplomacy by a government. As gastronomy is part of

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a country's cultural appeal, it must be linked to tourism development and the image projected both domestically and internationally.

According to Ecuador's 2023 Tourism Plan [4], the strategic pillars for tourism in Ecuador are quality destinations, connectivity, tourism security, marketing and promotion, and investment promotion, with a transversal focus on tourism competitiveness, accessibility, sustainability, inclusion, and innovation. It also proposes territorial coordination, collaborative governance based on information and communication technologies, as well as a regulatory framework and incentives.

The importance of gastrodiploacy lies in establishing it as a strategy that transcends through a country's culinary culture and its international recognition. It contributes to the empowerment and pride of local culture, and on the other hand, generates appreciation for diversity, enriching the interculturality that has characterized humanity throughout history. Therefore, the goal of this research is to be useful to the national entity responsible for tourism activities, particularly with the involvement of the Central Government through the country's Embassies and Consulates in other nations.

Some authors, such as Moral (p. 1), define it as "the use of native food to project a specific national image abroad, establishing itself as an effective form of cultural diplomacy through which countries aim to gain reputation and influence in foreign societies" [5].

The global influence of gastronomy in introducing a new culture and proving its authenticity through products and the tasting of representative dishes from a specific territory is widely recognized. Regarding its origins, "... it was first embraced by Thailand, which has served as an example for other countries around the world to begin adopting measures to promote their culture through the flavors of their cuisine" [6].

In 2002, Thailand launched the "Global Thai" project, which made it one of the pioneering countries to use terminology and showcase its culture through its gastronomy [3]. This experience demonstrates that it is a tangible manifestation that allows crossing borders and promoting the adaptation of a people's typical and representative cuisine abroad.

In 2009, South Korea launched the "Korean Cuisine for the World" campaign, aiming to increase the number of South Korean restaurants abroad and promote its Hansik (traditional Korean cuisine), known for its fermentation techniques that allow many dishes to be consumed over long periods. This demonstrated that Korean food is as rich in flavors as it is in nutrients. The initiative included a program to improve

training in Korean gastronomy at top culinary schools worldwide, scholarships for students of Korean cuisine, as well as a food truck that toured various countries to promote and offer tastings of their food [7].

Another example is Taiwan, which held international food fairs in major capital cities and airports around the world to promote its culinary culture [7]. Similarly, Japan, a country recognized worldwide for its sushi excellence, sent native chefs to teach sushi-making techniques in New York and London, where Japanese culinary schools have also opened, thus spreading its culture through teaching and learning [7].

Regionally, since 2008, Peru has integrated gastrodiploacy into its cultural diplomacy strategy using two key tools: the Foreign Policy Plan for Culture, with clear objectives related to gastronomy, and the use of its country brand to promote Peru as a culturally attractive destination with a strong gastronomic offering [8]. Peru's success is based on three elements: the high value of its biodiversity, the cultural contribution and influence of migration processes, and its positioning as a center of food domestication and Incan cultural influence [9].

Moreover, chefs have influenced and led a shift in mindset within civil society, with the chef emerging as an agent of change. The discourse and promotion led by chefs have transcended and motivated the population to take ownership of their local gastronomy.

Ecuador's Ministry of Tourism [4], through the National Tourism Plan 2030, currently proposes that the strategic pillars of quality destinations, connectivity, tourism security, marketing and promotion, innovation, and investment promotion be supported by territorial coordination alongside collaborative governance, as well as strategic tourism data provided by big data. The regulatory framework also facilitates the regulation and categorization of tourism establishments, whose management is directed toward accessibility, sustainability, and inclusion [10].

The impetus for this research is based on the rich cultural and gastronomic heritage of Ecuador, which stems from its diverse climates, geography, and cultures. Therefore, developing a proposal leveraging this strength, which represents our cultural and natural diversity, is viable [11]. The application of gastrodiploacy as an implementation strategy by the national authorities, as a pillar of tourism development, is both significant and coherent with the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador [12], which is considered plurinational and multicultural (p.1, p.3).

This contributes to the national and international recognition of the gastronomic fusion resulting from migratory waves and



local influences on cuisine as a cultural attraction of Ecuadorians.

According to statistical data from the National Financial Corporation [13], it is reported that "the Accommodation and Food Services sector totaled approximately \$1,347.30 million in 2022, equivalent to a contribution to GDP of..." 1.90%" (p. 4). Therefore, it is entirely feasible for the food and beverage sector, focusing on local dishes, to be enhanced through policies from the national government aimed at the governing body of national tourism activities.

The purpose of this study has been to propose the implementation of gastrodiploamacy as a strategic initiative by the national authority, as a pillar of tourism development in Ecuador, as well as the synergy with the private business sector and academia. To this end, three specific objectives have been established: I) To identify theories and applications of gastrodiploamacy by other countries, II) To study the approaches to gastrodiploamacy in Ecuador, and III) To validate with experts in tourism and gastronomy the strategies of gastrodiploamacy to be implemented by the national authority as a pillar of tourism development in Ecuador, together with the private sector and academia.

2. Materials and Methods Applied

The research is exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative, as the method employed involves the review of literature through the analysis of publications, texts, documents, and records from other countries that have implemented gastrodiploamacy as foreign policy and a tourism promotion tool; as well as the application of the Delphi method, which builds consensus on execution strategies considered viable by tourism and gastronomy experts [14].

The first method, literature review, involves searching for academic publications related to gastrodiploamacy in Ecuador. For this purpose, studies and publications have been analyzed that encompass the positive high impact of gastronomic promotion, highlighting initiatives from Asian countries (Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan) as well as from Latin America, specifically Peru.

Additionally, tourism plans at the national level, tourism and cultural heritage magazines from Spain and Latin America, master's theses, and websites from international organizations such as UNWTO have been studied, spanning from 2001 to the present date.

Table No. 1

Studies related to Gastrodiploamacy internationally and in Ecuador.

No.	Tema	Autor Y Año
1	Thailand's gastro-diplomacy Like the cuisine, like the country	Diario The Economist, 2001.
2	Food as communication: Gastro diplomacy in South Korea.	Pham, M., 2013.
3	Turkey's soft power and cultural diplomacy: Historical and regional analysis factors.	Turbay, M., y Jaramillo M., 2013.
4	Gastronomy and Diplomacy: The Perfect International Relationship	Trejo, J.A., y Jiménez, M., 2013.
5	Soft power and cultural diplomacy, a re-emerging dynamic in international relations.	Jaramillo, M., 2015.
6	Gastrodiploamacy as a Foreign Policy Tool. Case study: Peru	Díaz Acevedo, M., 2016.
7	The II World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism emphasizes the relevance of culture and local communities.	ONU Turismo, 2016.
8	Gastrodiploamacy: Legitimization and credibility of culture through gastronomy.	Dávila Vallejo, D., 2017.
9	Strengthening the country image through the use of gastrodiploamacy in Chile's external projection, based on the Peruvian case.	Merino, C., 2018.
10	Traditional gastronomy as a tourist attraction in the city of Puebla, Mexico.	Acle-Mena, R. S., Santos-Díaz, J. Y., & Herrera-López, B., 2020.
11	Gastrodiploamacy: an opportunity for Latin America.	Mc Cubbin, R., 2021.
12	A conceptual and literary approach to gastrodiploamacy gastrodiploamacy as a destination brand driver.	González, S.M., 2021.
13	Gastrodiploamacy: a comparative study between Thailand and Peru.	Vega Gavilanes, 2023.

The The Economist newspaper highlighted in 2001 that the Thai government introduced Thai food to thousands of new palates around the world through approximately 5,500 restaurants, and would persuade more people to visit Thailand; this initiative could subtly help deepen relationships with other countries [15].

In 2013, Pham emphasized non-verbal communication through gastronomy and its impact on promoting a country's products and dishes, as well as the influence of a government's political will to showcase its culture [16].

The projection of emerging powers is a phenomenon that demonstrates the willingness of some states to reclaim political spaces from the past or to gain visibility they have never reached, according to Turbay and Jaramillo, 2013. Amid this discussion, there are other nations with different ambitions, as their reach is not global [17].



In the same year, Trejo and Jiménez discussed the influence that gastronomy holds within International Relations. This influence is explained using two theories of International Relations: Public Diplomacy and Social Constructivism [18]. For Jaramillo (2015), it is clear the extent and possibilities achievable through Turkey's soft power and cultural diplomacy, as well as the cultural lessons for Colombia, considering it a reemerging dynamic in international relations [19].

At the 2nd World Forum on Gastronomic Tourism, organized by the UNWTO, Basque Culinary Center, and Promperú, held in Lima, Peru in 2016, gastronomic tourism was emphasized as a tool for promoting destinations, closely linked with cultural diversity and biodiversity, recognized as fundamental tourist attractions. The preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage was conceived as a parallel process. Another value emphasized was the importance of gastronomy in bridging different cultures and facilitating interculturality, a process referred to as 'gastrodiplomacy' [20].

Researcher Díaz Acevedo, in 2016, noted that since 2008, Peru has integrated gastrodiplomacy into its cultural diplomacy strategy through two tools: its Foreign Cultural Policy Plan and the use of its country brand to promote Peru as an attractive destination due to its vast gastronomic offering [8].

In 2017, Dávila Vallejo, in his research "Gastrodiplomacy: Legitimacy and Credibility of Culture through Gastronomy," highlighted the key elements of evaluation and adaptability, cultural linkage as a mechanism of differentiation, emphasizing the authentic characteristics of the territory, and standardizing the offering to present a clear and defined product to consumers [20].

Merino (2018) proposed in his publication "The Improvement of Peru's International Projection through Gastrodiplomacy, and the Review of the Chilean Case for Replication" that Chile should develop policies to strengthen its national image through gastrodiplomacy, using the Peruvian experience as a guide. Peru's experience has been instrumental in improving its international projection [21].

Acle-Mena et al., in 2020, supported the idea that traditional gastronomy is a catalyst for tourism activity in the city of Puebla, Mexico. They suggested that to enhance its impact, the sector should improve aspects related to customer service and entertainment to achieve a better visitor experience [22].

In 2021, McCubbin, in the proposal "Gastrodiplomacy: An Opportunity for Latin America," identified that the successful models of Asian countries provide insight into how to achieve, through state policies that transcend governments and political parties, a national or regional strategy around

gastrodiplomacy. This can result in international recognition, as well as economic investment and gastronomic tourism [23].

Silvia González, in 2021, described the different conceptual terms used in gastronomy, explaining gastrodiplomacy as an art for promoting a region or destination abroad and as a tool for cultural diplomacy [24].

Vega Gavilanes [25] added that there is the potential for a territory to promote a country's brand through food as an international attraction. His proposal involved a comparative study between Thailand and Peru, two countries that have excelled in gastrodiplomacy in Asia and Latin America. Both countries use diplomacy similarly, including historical background, program development, events, and media, though there are certain differences in these strategies.

While Thailand has an advantage due to its food's global popularity and longer use of gastrodiplomacy, Peru has managed to position itself as one of the most popular in Latin America.

In Ecuador, recognition from specialized gastronomic websites like Taste Atlas places encebollado as the second best soup in the world [26], and has ranked pan de yuca as the fifth best bread roll in the world [27].

Now, the second method involves applying the Delphi method to six experts in tourism and gastronomy, allowing the consensus of proposed strategies for implementing gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis for tourism development and cultural diffusion in Ecuador. See Table No. 2.

The Delphi method consists of validating subjective information provided by experts on problematic situations, ranging from identifying topics to developing analysis tools and collecting information. It is widely recognized for its usefulness in the social sciences, respecting its peculiarities [28]. The importance of this application also lies in application of evaluating the results with quantitative analytical tools.

Firstly, from public sector leaders in tourism, as they are familiar with the public policies applied and feasible for promoting gastronomic tourism, as well as what exists or is similar to gastrodiplomacy within the national territory.

Secondly, the representativeness of the private sector (mainly hospitality and restaurants) influences the availability, interest, and commitment of this group to determine the feasibility of implementing and supporting gastrodiplomacy.

Thirdly, the participation of academia, whose pillars are teaching, research, and engagement with society, creates the

vision of common benefit for the feasibility of applying this proposal.

Considering that this technique validates decision-making based on the knowledge and expertise of professionals in the field of study, so that they evaluate and support the research conducted [29].

The experts who have been part of the strategy analysis in the Delphi matrix contribute to tourism-gastronomy development from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, the private sector, and the public sector: Planeterra Foundation (1); Independent Tourism and Gastronomy Consultant (2); Escuela de los Chefs de Guayaquil, Higher Technological Institute (3); Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Ibarra Campus (4); Insular Zonal Directorate of the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador (5); and Hotel Palace (6). See Table No. 2.

Table No. 2.

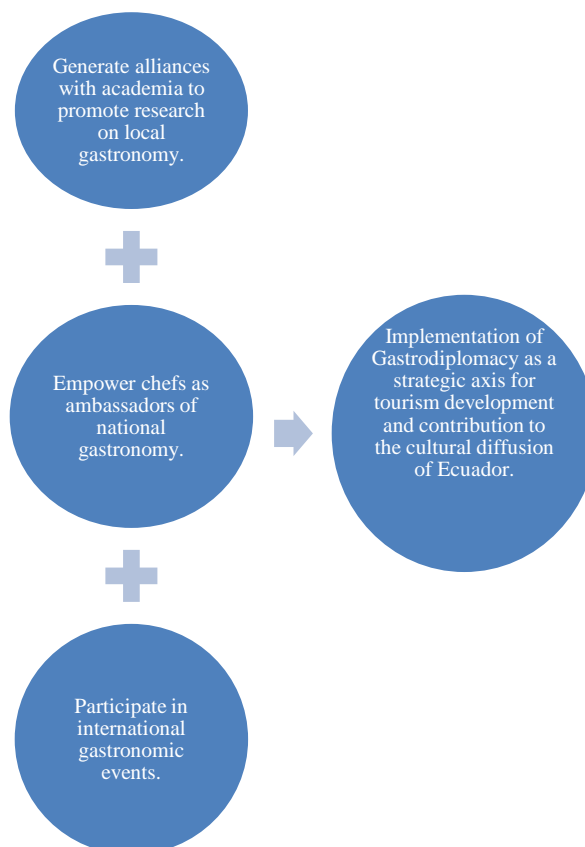
Delphi Matrix Analysis: Implementation of Gastrodiplomacy as a Strategic Axis of Tourism in Ecuador.

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No.	Estrategias	Prom.	Expertos					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Political decision and inclusion in the Tourism Plan 2030	7,33	9	10	10	6	10	8
2	Agreements with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on dissemination policies	6,83	8	3	9	5	7	9
3	Positioning the importance of local gastronomy in civil society	8,00	10	4	10	7	7	10
4	Creation of gastronomic routes for the appreciation of national culture	8,50	10	4	10	9	8	10
5	Empowering chefs as ambassadors of national gastronomy.	8,67	10	10	10	4	8	10
6	Professionalize local gastronomy.	8,50	10	10	10	2	9	10
7	Agree with the national media to promote local gastronomy.	6,83	9	6	9	3	7	7
8	Generate alliances with academia to promote research on local gastronomy.	9,00	9	8	10	10	8	9
9	Participation in international gastronomic events	9,33	8	10	10	8	10	10
10	Economic boost for innovative cuisine (signature cuisine, application of techniques).	6,50	10	6	10	1	9	3

For this reason, the three strategies are reflected, which will consequently enable the achievement of the objective of this study: Implementation of Gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis for tourism development and contribution to the cultural diffusion of Ecuador. See Image No. 1.

Fig. 1.

Strategies that enable the implementation of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism in Ecuador.



Based on the Delphi Matrix Analysis regarding the implementation of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism in Ecuador, the validation by the six chosen experts is evident, specifically for the three strategies with the highest averages:

Participation in international gastronomic events, Generating alliances with academia to promote research on local gastronomy, and Empowering chefs as ambassadors of national gastronomy.

The strategies that enable the implementation of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism in Ecuador, outlined in Image No. 1, were derived from the application of the Delphi Matrix on the implementation of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism in Ecuador.

3.- Analysis and Interpretation.

The analysis and interpretation of data are carried out based on the literary review of international relations, experiences from other countries regarding cultural and gastronomic diffusion, and country branding, as well as their significant



positive impact on tourism. The Delphi method analysis by experts in the fields of tourism and gastronomy helps validate the strategies that will enable the achievement of the objective of this study, weighted and finalized according to the highest averages and lowest standard deviations marked in Table No. 2.

Literature Review: The data obtained from the literature review clarify that the closest related topic to this research in Ecuador is linked to the National Tourism Plan 2030, led by the Ministry of Tourism and developed in collaboration with key stakeholders in the industry. This plan, based on tourist demand and supply, aims to strengthen the country's tourism competitiveness through the creation of a favorable environment, policies for travel and tourism, infrastructure, and the valuation of natural and cultural resources. Gastronomy, an essential part of the cultural attraction of populations, showcases the essence of products and culinary preparations based on popular traditions.

The fourth axis, "Promotion and Marketing," of the National Tourism Plan 2030 focuses on reaching the tourist profile through digital media (social networks, platforms, etc.) that these groups use. However, the focus on gastronomic diffusion is not visibly established in the Tourism Plan 2023, which is an undeniable strength of the country that should be leveraged with a sustainable and responsible approach. There are thesis works proposing gastrodiplomacy in Ecuador, but as of now, there is no published information regarding a foreign or tourism policy focused on gastronomic diffusion.

Delphi Method: From the application of the Delphi Matrix method, unanimous consensus is reflected by the six experts who validate the proposed strategies for implementing gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism in Ecuador; representing academia, the public sector, and the private sector related to gastronomy and tourism.

From the analysis, the validation is evidenced specifically for the three strategies with the highest averages, which stand out as follows:

Participation in international gastronomic events (average of 9.33),

Generating alliances with academia to promote research on local gastronomy (average of 9.00), and

Empowering chefs as ambassadors of national gastronomy (average of 8.67).

Participation in international gastronomic events aims to strengthen the experience of internationalization and diffusion of the country's most representative dishes, accompanied by their respective storytelling that strengthens and explains their origins, history, and applications.

Generating alliances with academia to promote research on local gastronomy considers the importance of tourism and gastronomy programs (graduate profiles, subjects, bibliographies), reviving higher education networks with a gastronomic focus to strengthen national identity and integrate the community (the general public).

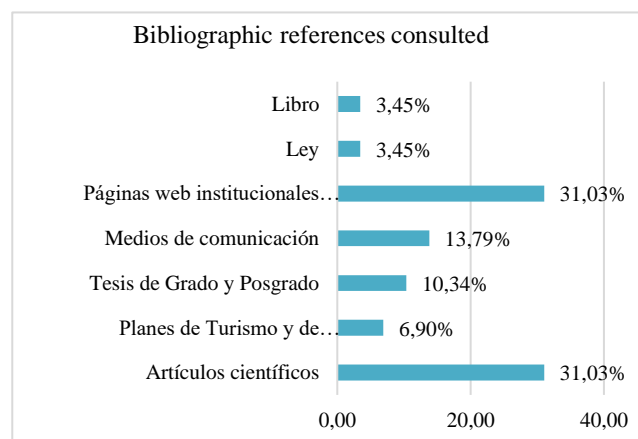
Empowering chefs as ambassadors of national gastronomy through participation and encouragement from the private sector, academia, and the public sector, leading processes to raise visibility and consolidate the role of the chef regarding the preservation of iconic and representative preparations of the region.

For this reason, the three strategies are reflected, which will consequently allow for the accomplishment of the objective of this study: Implementation of Gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism development and contribution to the cultural diffusion of Ecuador.

In Table 1, publications related to gastrodiplomacy are presented, along with the influence on foreign policy, international relations, communication through gastronomy and the flavors of nations, as well as the strengthening of the country brand through its application both internationally and within Ecuador.

Within the country, it is evident that there is no information on the application by the relevant organizations. However, proposals have been reflected in the form of undergraduate thesis projects, scientific publications, media articles, and tourism plans. See Fig. 2.

Fig. 2.
References consulted regarding Gastrodiplomacy.



For the development of this research, twenty-nine bibliographic references have been consulted: 9 articles from scientific journals (31.03%), 9 institutional and business websites (31.03%), 4 national and international media outlets



(13.79%), 3 degree and master's theses (10.34%), 2 tourism and marketing plans (6.90%), 1 law (3.45%), and 1 book (3.45%). This represents a total of twenty-nine sources.

4. Discussion

Ecuador is characterized by its mega-diversity in both natural (flora and fauna) and cultural (ethnic) aspects, making it a destination with great potential for gastronomic development, offering cultural appeal and representing the territory.

Reconsidering the application of Gastrodiplomacy in Ecuador raises questions about the reality in the national territory: What strategies have other countries implemented? What is Ecuador's strategy regarding Gastrodiplomacy? Has it been identified as a policy by the Central Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism? Who are the key actors for the cultural diffusion of Ecuadorian gastronomy?

According to the objectives set forth in this study, information was gathered to identify the successful cases of Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Peru. However, there is no information from Ecuador regarding its application by the Central Government or the relevant ministries.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Tourism's gastronomic diffusion is reflected through participation in major international fairs such as FITUR in Spain, ITB Berlin in Germany, and WTM Latam in Brazil. However, gastrodiplomacy goes beyond just this; it lies in the large-scale cultural diffusion of gastronomy to the general population (people) of other nations.

Thus, this study is of high impact for the country, as tourism as an economic activity influences the dynamism of the economy on a large scale. Therefore, the literature review and validation of strategies by experts clearly show that its implementation is feasible as a strategy for the national authority to adopt as a pillar of tourism development in Ecuador.

If the proposed gastrodiplomacy is applied, it will create a positive image of the country despite the current social and economic reality and will also attract tourists eager to experience the nature and culture (including gastronomy) that our country offers. This will be possible as long as gastrodiplomacy is adopted as a strategic axis of national tourism development and is considered a public policy for the benefit of the population.

The limitations of the findings relate to the scope and impact on the Central Government and political will. The execution is viable by uniting the efforts of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and academia, in promoting

our products and gastronomy, which are valued internationally. Therefore, it is essential to consider this.

It is important to note that the three key actors for the viability of this proposal are coordination, commitment, and synergy between the public sector, the private sector, and academia.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the gastronomic diversity of our country is characterized by four distinct regions: the Coast, Highlands, Amazon, and Galápagos, each showcasing multiculturalism, reflected even in our internationally valued products and gastronomy. Therefore, the diffusion of our gastronomy is a key strategy that will help make Ecuador better known and recognized internationally.

The immediate recommendation is the implementation of this research with an inclusive approach involving all sectors of society that can influence the State, whose results will effectively contribute to the country's tourism and, consequently, economic development.

For the execution of the proposed strategies, there must be commitment from the public, private, and academic sectors to ensure the success and empowerment of this research proposal.

From the public sector, this involves the Central Government and agreements through the Ministry of Tourism, provincial and municipal offices, and Ecuadorian Embassies and Consulates abroad, to foster spaces for cultural discussion and gastrodiplomacy, with strategic partners and non-profit organizations to position Ecuadorian gastronomy internationally.

From academia, through educational services, empower gastronomic professionals to understand the significance of national culinary foundations, recognizing their origin, history, and current consumption.

From the private sector, the focus is on the professionalization of the gastronomy field and its promotion both nationally and internationally, ensuring high-quality national cuisine that also fosters the tourism experience within the country.

The reflections generated by this study represent an opportunity based on the implementation of Gastrodiplomacy as a strategic axis of tourism development and contribution to the cultural diffusion of Ecuador. The objectives outlined make it clear that with the combined contributions from academia (through professionalization and training), the private sector (creating quality, sustainable, and responsible offerings), non-governmental organizations (with continuous contributions to less developed communities), and the public



sector (setting guidelines at national, provincial, and municipal levels), the execution is indeed possible.

6.- Author Contributions.

1. Conceptualization: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
2. Data curation: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
3. Formal analysis: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
4. Acquisition of funds: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
5. Research: María Belem Delgado Gomez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
6. Methodology: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
7. Project administration: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
8. Resources: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
9. Software: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
10. Supervision: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
11. Validation: (María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
12. Visualization: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
13. Writing - original draft: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.
14. Writing - proofreading and editing: María Belem Delgado Gómez and Diana Valeria Delgado Campuzano.

7.- Acknowledgements.

The contribution of Maritza Cárdenas and Adrián Borja has been fundamental for the development of this research work, as well as the participation of tourism and gastronomy experts in the application of the methodology for validating strategies in the Delphi Method matrix. Special thanks are due to the participation of: Selene Orellana, Ruddy Villegas, Manuel Romero, Lorena Arellano, Felipe Alava, and Jacob Fuentes.

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